

4/1/70

G. Muntion
S E V E N

CONFERENCES

HELD IN THE

King of *FRANCE*'s Cabinet

O F

PAINTINGS,

BETWEEN

Mr. LE BRUN, | Mr. DE CHAMPAGNE,
Mr. BOURDON, | Mr. PERRAULT, &c.

On some of

The most celebrated PICTURES of *Raphael*,
Titian, *Paulo Veronese*, *Poussin*, &c.

IN WHICH

The METHOD of forming a *Judgment* on
PAINTINGS, is laid down with the
greatest Elegance and Perspicuity.

Translated from the FRENCH of FELIBIEN. *by J. Helme*

With a curious PREFACE.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. COOPER, at the Globe in
Pater-noster-Row. 1740.

SEVEN

CONFERENCES

HELD

King of France

PAINING

Mr. J. Brown
Mr. J. Brown



The Method
PAINING
General

Translating
With a

L. O. W. B. R. O. W.
Printed for T. Cooper, in the Strand
1790



SEVEN
CONFERENCES
ON
PAINTING.

By

Jessamine



CONFERENCES

L. Academies, etc. - Paris. - Académie Royale
de Peinture et de Sculpture

PAINTING
MADE IN FRANCE

Mr. Bourgeois

PAINTING



THE MUSEUM
PAINTING

Printed for T. Cockerell
Patent-Printer-Royal



T H E

P R E F A C E.



It is not of late only that Painting and Sculpture have come into Reputation among the French; for they cherished them as soon as they began to recover their ancient Beauty. Francis the First, invited them into France by caressing and encouraging them so soon as they began to appear in Italy, in the Time of Raphael and Michael
a Angelo.

Angelo. *But with whatever Beauty these fine Arts appeared at that Time, that made them so much sought after, 'tis certain that since the Establishment of the Royal Academy for Painting and Sculpture, they have shone forth with a greater and more noble Lustre, and are become so considerable, as to merit the Esteem of the greatest Prince in the World. On his Accession to the Throne he shewed them the first Marks of his Regard; for in the Year 1648 he founded that Academy, which has ever since been maintained by his Munificence, and honoured with the Protection of his principal Ministers.*

This great King, who began to be a Conqueror as soon as he came to the Throne,

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Throne, immediately perceived that he would have no less need of the best Artists, than the Pens of the most illustrious Writers, in order to leave immortal Monuments of his Grandeur, and transmit to Posterity the History of his great Actions.

We have likewise seen, that when all Europe was distracted by a long War, the Sciences and fine Arts have not abandoned France. They have always flourished in Paris, whither they seem to have retired as to a sure Azyle; and as fast as his Majesty's Arms made new Conquests abroad, they likewise continued to make new Progress at Home, that the Reign of this

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this potent Monarch might be more memorable.

But whatever Advantages they had in those Times, as glorious to France as they were troublesome to her Enemies, we may venture to affirm that his Majesty, by giving Peace to Europe, has also laid a more firm Foundation for the fine Arts, by putting them in a Condition to appear with that Lustre, which formerly rendered them so famous among the most learned and polite Nations.

Towards the End of the Year 1663, the King, by giving to Mr. Colbert the Office of Superintendant of the Buildings, shewed that he intended to
make

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make the Arts flourish more than they had done hitherto. This great Man, who equally understood and loved the fine Arts, as he was zealous for his Master's Glory, re-established the making of Tapestries in Paris, and several other Places, and begun many other Works, 'till then unknown in France. But as he knew that the Art of Painting extends itself to every Kind of Workmanship, and that nothing contributes more to the Glory of a Prince than those immortal Works which Painters and Sculptors leave to Posterity, he afterwards procured from his Majesty new Favours to them that excelled in those Arts, in order to raise Emulation among them from the Prospects of Honour and Reward.

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He did not content himself with this, but as if he had been chosen by his Majesty to be Vice-Protector of the Academy in Place of the Chancellor, who held that Office since the Death of Cardinal Mazarin; amidst all his great Employments he would often execute that Charge, and take Cognizance of what passed in their Assemblies. But not being able to attend so often as he inclined, he deputed Mr. Dumetz, Intendant of the Moveables of the Crown, and Mr. Perault, Master of the Buildings, to assist at the Academy, and to carry his Orders to it. As the particular Affection he bore to it made him constantly endeavour to advance it and make it flourish; one Day when he honoured it with his
Presence,

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Presence, to distribute the Prizes which the King allowed the Students; after he had examined the Pieces they had drawn, and they had told him what had been treated of in their late Assemblies; he said there was two Ways of teaching Arts and Sciences, by Precepts and by Examples; the one instructed the Understanding, and the other the Imagination: And as in Painting, the Imagination has the greatest Share of the Work, it is manifest that Examples are very necessary to make one perfect in that Art, and are the surest Guides to young Students: He therefore thought that if the Works of the best Masters were exposed in the Academy as Models, and if any one would inform the
Students

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Students wherein the Perfection of the Art consists; this Method of Teaching, joined to their other Exercises already practised, would be of very great Utility. For though the Perfection of a Piece chiefly depends on the Force and Beauty of Genius; one cannot deny that the Remarks which might be made, would be of great Use, since here, as in all other Arts, Experience discovers many Things necessary to a Student, who, if he makes a proper Use of the Remarks already made by the Learned, may save himself from many painful Researches, which take up a great deal of Time to one who makes them without any Assistance. Thus in several other Arts, particularly Musick and Poetry, which are congenial

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nial to Painting, standard Rules have been found out to bring them to Perfection, though all who know them are not equally capable to put them in Practice.

That to instruct Youth in the Art of Painting, it would be necessary to shew them the Works of the greatest Painters, and in publick Discourses to inform them of what chiefly contributes to make up the Beauty and Perfection of Pieces. That every one being at Liberty to speak his Sentiments, they should examine all the Particulars which enter into the Composition of a Subject; and that even their different Opinions would help to discover many Things better than Precepts and Max-

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ims. And, as these Discourses had not been in Use hitherto in their Assemblies, he said, there might perhaps be Persons found out, who though they might be afraid that they could not acquit themselves so well at first, yet they should not think so, for though they met with Difficultys in the Beginning, they would soon surmount them, and take no less Pleasure in discoursing of the Beauties of a Picture, than to shew them by their Pencil and Colours. This Method, he added, would be no less profitable than glorious to their Body, since in treating of the Art of Painting in a Way which had not been practised hitherto, they would one Day be sensible, that if they were not the first who found out Rules, at least they had the Honour

Honour to be the first who brought them to their highest Perfection.

Mr. Colbert having thus shewn them how great an Advantage must attend this Conduct and Method of Study, it was resolved they should meet on the first Saturday of every Month in the great Hall of the Academy, or in the King's Cabinet of Paintings, which he gave them the Use of to make their Observations in. That the Chancellor and Rectors of the Academy should open the Conferences in their Turn by a Discourse, in which they were to examine the Picture they had chosen for the Subject of the Day: That Mr. Le Brun, as Chancellor, should begin the first Saturday, and the Intendant

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of the Buildings should collect all the Conferences, and put them in order, to be published from Time to Time.

In Consequence of this, they began to assemble on Saturday the 7th of May, and we may see by their Conferences during the Rest of the Year, how many important Remarks they have made on Painting.

*In short, the Academy being filled with Men of Learning, scarce the smallest Beauty or Fault escaped their Observation: Thus any one might learn to imitate the one and shun the other; and those who had been at more than ordinary Pains to increase their Knowledge, communicated to the Rest
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the Fruits of their long Study without impoverishing themselves.

They who assisted at these Conferences saw well of what Advantage they might be, not only to Painters, but to all the Lovers of the fine Arts. And as Use makes every Thing easy, we shall find in the Sequel, so great Discoveries in their Remarks on Painting and Sculpture, that very little remains to be said on these Subjects which can promote the Instruction of Students.

We may observe in these Discourses how many Parts of Painting they have already handled with great Accuracy. In the first which has for its Subject the Picture of St. Michael, by
Raphael,

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Raphael, *there are learned Observations upon Design and Expression, which are so many excellent Lessons and important Precepts for such as are learning to design.*

In the second they have not confined themselves to what belongs to Drawing only, because Titian, whose Work they examine, was not very famous for that Quality, but excelled in colouring, on which they have made very learned Remarks.

In the third Conference they treat of Laocöon, that celebrated and finest Piece of Grecian Antiquity: One may see that there is nothing very useful or necessary for Design and strong Expressions

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pressions of Colour, which they have not taken Notice of.

The fourth treats of other different Expressions, having one of Raphael's finest Pictures for its Subject. There one may learn the Method of varying the Expressions according to the Quality of the Subject, and how he must distribute Light or Shade, according to the Scene of the Picture.

The fifth treats chiefly the Ordinance, and as it is true that in these Compositions Ease is rather the Gift of Nature than the Effect of Study, we shall find greater Reason to admire the fine Composition of this Picture of Paulo Veronese, and his easy Manner
of

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of Painting, than be able to discover by it, any Means of imitating it. Not but these Observations that are made upon it may give us fine Ideas, with Regard to Colouring, and shew us how to give an Appearance of an easy and judicious Disposition to a Picture.

In the sixth there are several Remarks of different Kinds. As the Subject comprehends many Things, here they speak of Composition, Design, Proportions, Colours and Lights, in a very extensive and learned Manner; and particularly of all the Kinds of Expressions applicable to a History, such as that of the Fall of the Manna, represented by Mr. Poussin.

In

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In the seventh, the same Parts of Painting are treated of, but the Subject of the Picture before them being one of Mr. Poussin's representing our Saviour curing the two blind Men, it has so little Resemblance of the other, that the Remarks are absolutely different. The first is chiefly taken up about Decorum, and the Manner of treating History: And the different Opinions of Persons give Occasion to shew how exact a Painter ought to be, to omit nothing that may be necessary to express the Action he would represent.

It is not to be doubted, as I have said, but in the subsequent Conferences many Things will be discovered, which have been hitherto unknown: And that

Painters, who would work by the Principles of the Art, will form so clear and just an Idea of what they would represent, that they will be at no Loss in the Execution of it. For certainly the greatest Difficulty in the Production of a Work is in the well-forming of it in the Imagination; as Children untimely born give greatest Pain to their Mothers at their Birth, and but seldom grow up to be Men.

And though the Observations made in these Conferences are not delivered with all the Order that seems necessary, when one would lay down Rules for understanding an Art; all these Lessons being nevertheless expressly applied to particular Pieces, they will not fail

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fail to come into a just Arrangement in the Mind, so that when one sees a Picture, all the Ideas we have of the Parts which serve to make it perfect, come without Confusion one after another, and discover the Beauties in Proportion as we attend to it. The same will happen to those that work after having well formed an Idea, and conceived the whole Oeconomy of it.

'Tis true that to judge rightly of this, and to form a distinct Notion of a Work one would execute, we must have a perfect Knowledge of the Subject, and of the Parts of which it ought to be composed, and what Way we must proceed. And this Knowledge which one acquires, and for which Rules

are laid down, is in my Opinion what we may call Art.

Now it is certain that the Art of Painting has not been perfectly understood but by the ancient Greeks, and some others, who appeared about two hundred Years ago : For though it deserves a considerable Rank among the liberal Arts, they who have given us any Rules concerning it, have always treated of the less useful Parts ; they seem rather to have left it in the Number of mechanic Arts, than to give it the Place it deserves. But, indeed, Painting is of a much higher Class, and in this, surpasses the most celebrated Arts, that by forming as exalted Thoughts, and in treating the
same

same Subject as History and Poetry it is not content to represent them, faithfully, or to invent with Genius, but forms Images of them so admirable that it makes us believe we see the Things themselves : And in showing them to the World agreeably, instructs the ignorant, and gives Pleasure to the greatest Artists.

As the Pleasure and Instruction one receives from Painting and Sculpture arises not only from the Knowledge of Design, and the Beauty of Colours, or from the Value of the Materials ; but the Greatness of the Thoughts, and the Knowledge of the Subject represented, it follows, that there is a peculiar Art different from
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the Materials and the Hand of the Artist, by which a Painter ought to form his Pictures in his own Mind, and without which he cannot, with a Pencil only, produce a perfect Work : Since it is not in this Art, as in some others, where Industry and Dexterity are sufficient to produce Beauty.

Now it is not the mechanical Part, but a greater Secret, a more useful Accomplishment wholly consisting in a refined Taste, that is to be learned from these Conferences, where all the Parts of which it is composed are treated by the best modern Painters. But that the Reader may understand them with greater Ease, I think it necessary to add a few Words concerning

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ing them, that they who have a Mind to learn may at least have a slight Notion of what follows, and may in some Manner be instructed in whatever is essential to make a perfect Painter.

This Art in general extends to all the different Ways of representing natural Bodies; and though Painters sometimes draw things which are not natural, such as Monsters and Grotesque Figures of their own Invention, yet even these, being always composed of Parts known, and taken from different Animals, cannot be said purely to be the Effects of Imagination.

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The Representation that is made of a Body by Lines or Colours is considered as a mechanical Employment; for this Reason as there are different Workmen in this Art, who apply themselves to different Subjects; it is certain that in Proportion as one employs himself in the most difficult and noble Parts, he excells those which are low and common, and aggrandises himself by a more noble Study. Thus he who paints fine Landskips, is above him who only paints Fruits, Flowers, or Shells: He who paints after Life is more to be regarded than he who only represents still Life; and as the Figure of a Man is the most perfect Work of God upon Earth, it is also
certain

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certain that he who imitates God in painting human Figures, is by far more excellent than all others. Moreover though it be no small Matter to make the Picture of a Man appear as if it was alive, and to give the Appearance of Motion to that which has none; one who can only draw Portraits, has not as yet attained to this high Perfection of Art, and cannot pretend to the same Honour with abler Painters. He must for that end advance from Painting one single Figure, to draw several together; he must paint History and Fable; he must represent great Actions like an Historian, or agreeable ones as the Poets. And soaring yet higher, he must by allegorical Compositions, know

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how to hide under the Vail of Fable the Virtues of great Men, and the most sublime Mysteries. He is esteemed a great Painter who acquits himself well in Enterprizes of this Kind. 'Tis in this that the Force, the Sublime and Grandeur of the Art consists. And it is this particularly that ought early to be learned by young Students.

*We see then that a Painter is not only an incomparable Artist, as he imitates natural Bodies and the Actions of Men, but further he is an ingenious and learned Author; as he invents and produces thoughts quite his own. Insomuch that he is able to represent all Nature, and whatever passes in the World; and which is yet
more,*

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more, to produce things quite new, of which he is as it were the Creator.

I have already observed, that this Art is divided into different Parts, either because of the Diversity of the Bodies, and the Actions which are imitated, or the different Manner of imitating them, as in designing with one Colour simply, or in painting with different Colours mixed together, or in Engraving or Sculpture; it seems necessary to say something of all these particular Manners. But rather than enter into so long a Detail, I believe, it will be better to speak in general of the Composition of a Picture where some Fable or Allegory, or History is represented, which are the

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more sublime Subjects, and as such, comprehend all the others. It is for this Reason that I have said there are two principal Parts to be considered, one which regards Reasoning or Theory, the other which has respect to the Hand or Practice.

The Parts belonging to the Theory, are these which make one acquaint'd with the Subject, and serve to render it Great, Noble, and Probable, as History or Fable; this is what they call Costume, which is the Truth necessary to express any particular History or Fable, and the Beauty of Thoughts in the proper Disposition of every Part.

The

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The Parts which respect the Hand or Practice are Ordonnance, Design, Colouring, and whatever serves to express them in general or in particular.

What is called History or Fable in a Picture, is an Imitation of some Action which passed or may have passed between several Persons; but care must be taken that there be but only one Subject in a Picture; and though it may be filled with a great Number of Figures they must all have respect to the principal One, as may be seen in the sixth Conference upon the Picture of the Manna.

Moreover

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*Moreover as in Pieces for the Theatre; the Fable is not in its Perfection if it has not a Beginning, a Middle, and an End, to make the Subject of the Piece intelligible; one may likewise in great Pictures (the better to instruct Spectators) so contrive the Ordonnance, and the Disposition of the Figures, that we may even judge what preceeded the Action: And this Mr. Pouffin has done in the Picture of the Manna, where we see Signs of Hunger in the Faces of the Jews, which they had suffered before they received that Relief from Heaven. And although he may make several Actions be done at the same Time and at the same Place, he ought not
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for all that to represent them all, for a Painter who is Guilty of Faults like these, will meet with as much censure as Euripides, whose Tragedy of the Trojan Dames has been found fault with by every Body, because he has represented three Actions at once.

Besides this, there must appear in great Subjects, something marvellous in order to raise an Admiration of the History that is treated, and of the Painter's own Genius. This is expressed by the Beauty of the Figures, the noble Adjustments, and by a Grandeur and Majesty which shines through the whole Work, as we may observe in the miraculous Cure of the blind Men, which has given Occasion

to

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to the seventh Conference. Further, there must be Possibility in all the Actions, and in all the Motions of the Figures, as well as in the Expression of the principal Subject, to the End that Probability be found throughout as a most necessary Part, and which never fails to please the Eyes of the Beholder. One of the ancient Greek Painters having represented a Bird perched upon a single Ear of Corn which did not yield under it, was reprehended by the Peasants as one of small Judgment. If so minute a Thing does not fail to offend the Eyes of the most ignorant, how will greater Faults which appear in great Subjects, hurt an intelligent Eye. Thus in the fifth Conference,

we

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we do not think that the Miracle of breaking Bread at Emaus is treated with Probability, because the Nature of the Place, and the Characters of the Persons that are about our Saviour do not agree with the Action. But in the first Conference, we find that the St. Michael of Raphael could crush the Demon who is under his Feet tho' he does not touch him; because it is not impossible for an Angel, to whom God has given Power to conquer the Devil, to crush him in that Manner.

What is of greatest Importance to the Perfection of Fable or History, is the different Expressions of Joy and Grief, and all the other Passions proper to the Persons painted: It is this

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which

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which makes the fine Picture of Raphael so admirable which is the Subject of the fourth Conference. To this we may add the various Airs of Heads and Attitudes, for these are the fine Parts which agreeably affect those who behold a Picture, and which leading us pleasantly into the Knowledge of the Subject, makes us feel the same Sentiments of Joy or Admiration which the Persons represented are supposed to have. This is shewn in the sixth Conference where the Groupes represented by Mr. Poussin serve to instruct us in the History, and to shew the Change among the Israelities passing from a miserable to a more comfortable State.

Nor

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Nor is this enough: to make a Work perfect, it must have particular Marks to distinguish the principal Figures from one another, and to note to the most extraordinary Actions; as in the Picture of the Manna, we may distinguish Moses from all the rest, as well by his Place as his Mein and his Vestments, and by an Air which gives one an Idea of what he has heard, and finally by the Actions of those about him. But if a Painter must vary his Subject by some particular Actions, he ought to be careful they be neither too many, or too low, even tho' they have some Connection with the History he is painting. Domini-

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Saint Andrew is censured on this Account, for he has represented one of the Executioners falling as he was drawing a Rope, for which he is laughed at by the Spectators who are seen mocking him by their indecent Gestures ; because this Expression, being unworthy so serious a Subject, instead of attracting the Eyes, and raising Compassion for the Saint who is going to be martyred, distracts us by these ridiculous Actions. The Expressions therefore of the particular Figures, which ought only to accompany the principal One, must be Simple, Natural, Judicious, and have a decent Relation to the Figure which serves as a Body to the Work
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of which the others are but as Members.

After having considered what belongs to History, which ought to be a single Action of competent extent, and of Beauty worthy of the Subject, which must be probable, and by its Expressions help to discover what is meant; I shall pass to the Costume, which is nothing else but a strict Observance of all that is proper to the Persons represented, who ought to appear with good or ill, high or low Characters according to those they represent. This is done in the fifth and seventh Conferences: And further it consists in the Knowledge of what is necessary to be observed with Regard to Ages, Sexes,

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Sexes, Countries, and different Professions, and to give the Manner and Passions peculiar to each Country. In this Raphael has been admirably well skilled, but neither Titian nor Paulo Veronese have been Masters of this Art. It is nevertheless none of the least Qualifications; on the contrary we see it is one of the most necessary to instruct the ignorant, and most pleasing to intelligent Eyes.

As to the Beauty of Thoughts in the Disposition of every Thing, it consists in representing the Subject in an agreeable easy Manner, and in giving every Figure a natural Expression neither too weak nor too strong; in hitting off the Characters proper to each

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each Person so as not to spoil the principal One in the Picture. We see in the Rebecca done by Mr. Poussin, of which we shall speak in another Conference ; how rich and agreeable the Composition is, both by the magnificent Disposition of the Figures, and the Variety of Faces, Actions, and Draperies. But as there are Subjects less noble, they must be treated more simply, not to fall into a Fault like that of the Bassons, and some other Flemish Painters, who in this have observed no Measure at all.

These are the Things which principally regard Theory, and in Truth it is surprising to see how some Painters and Sculptors, with all their Knowledge,

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ledge, all their Imagination and Invention, and all their Skill in the Disposition of great Subjects, do however find themselves as it were deserted by all their natural and acquired Abilities so soon as they attempt to execute what they had intended. On the other Hand, there are not a few who have a very good Hand, and yet have no Invention. Insomuch that it is no great Wonder there are so few excellent Works, since to produce such, not only a very fertile Genius is required, but likewise a solid Judgment to make a right Use of its Inventions, and great Practice to be able to set them in a fine Light.

For

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For this Reason most of the ancient Greek Painters, knowing the great Compass of their Art, contented themselves with making Choice of one Part of it in which they endeavoured to perfect themselves; as a Dionysius who painted Men only, a Nicias of Athens who was famous for painting Women finely, an Aristodemus celebrated for painting Wrestlers: A Calaces remarkable for the Decorations of the Theatre; and even they among them who have excelled in great Compositions, have not been Masters of all the Parts equally, but have raised their Reputation by some one in which they have surpassed others, as

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Apelles,

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Apelles, in the Beauty and Grace of his Figures.

As to Practice, it regards the Manner of disposing a Subject, and putting every Figure in its due Place. For though I have said that Facility in the Ordonnance depends chiefly on the Strength of the Painter's Imagination, who must for that End have a particular Gift from Nature as is observed in the fourth Conference in speaking of Paulo Veronese: Yet a Painter may supply the Defects of Nature, by carefully disposing all his Figures in order, and not putting them in Places where they may create Confusion, or by giving them disagreeable Attitudes; but on the contrary,
assembling

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assembling them by Parts and Groupes in the Manner Mr. Pouffin has so finely done in his Picture of the Manna. In him we see all that belongs to Design and Proportion, on which there are Remarks made in the sixth Conference, to shew how they must be handled agreeably to the Age and Quality of the Persons.

'Tis in this Conference and in the seventh, that they handle what belongs to the fine Harmony of Colours, which shews, how to distribute Lights and Shades to the best Advantage, and in observing an agreeable and judicious Contrast in all the Work, yet to preserve a general Union throughout the Body, by which one may at first Sight

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have a strong Idea of the whole Subject.

Although this second Part which treats of Practice be less noble than the first, we must not imagine it ought to be considered as purely mechanical, because in painting, the Hand does nothing without being conducted by the Imagination, otherwise it cannot draw one single Feature or Stroke of a Pencil with any Success. Insomuch that they who undertake to draw a Portrait even though they do not employ the utmost Efforts of their Genius, and make use of all their Knowledge on that Occasion, though they do not find so much use for them as in composing a great Work: The Trouble
is

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is not very small when one must consider and mark distinctly all the Contours which form the Parts of a Face, for they must all be known from one another by a vast Number of Features which distinguish them, and be all set in their proper Place, and ranged in such a Manner as to imitate very nicely the Object proposed; to set them at a Distance, or bring them nearer differently one from another: To diminish or augment their Compass, and after that to give them such a Colour as may preserve to each of them their particular Character; lastly, to compose one entire Mass where all the Parts are joyned together with so much Union and Sweetness, that the Tints which are employed almost
seperately

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*separately in several Places, may seem to make but only one Colour, which changes insensibly according to the different Places it is employed in, but yet in such a Manner that this Mass being enlightened or shaded in some Places more than others, the Lights and Shades, the strong Tints and the weaker, may lose themselves in one another with so much Art, as to give Relief and Roundness, and represent real Flesh. It is however this ingenious Mixture of Colours, and the Knowledge of Designing well, and preserving the Features, which beget these fine Expressions and natural Motions that appear from the Life, and which imprint on a Face the Passions one Designs to represent. So
that*

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that the Practice of Designing well, and mixing the Colours artfully, must not be reckoned things of small Account, for a great many Difficulties are to be surmounted in both. On the contrary we may consider, that if in drawing one single Head there are so many things difficult to be well represented, because in Nature herself, although all Faces have the same Parts, one cannot find two of an exact Resemblance; how much more difficult is it to produce a great Work, all the Parts of which ought to be handled with a thousand Considerations, on Account of the different Relations they have to one another either in Drawing, Colouring, or Expression.

Mr.

I P R E F A C E.

Mr. Pouffin being perswaded that the Beauty of a Picture consists in making every thing that enters into the Composition have a particular Mark of what the Work represents in general, made that his principal Study: And in all his Productions, the Expression of his Subject is so generally diffused, that there appears throughout an Air of Joy or Sorrow, Anger or Sweetness, according to the Nature of his Story. He was of Opinion that as in Musick the Ear is not delighted but by a just Agreement of different Voices or Sounds: So in Painting the Eye is not charmed but by a fine Harmony of Colours, and a just Agreement of all the Parts
with

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with one another. So that when he reflected that different Sounds occasion different Motions in the Soul, as it is touched by grave or sharp Notes, he doubted not but by setting forth Objects in a moving Disposition, and an Expression more or less violent, under different Colours laid one after another, and differently mixed, he might give the Sight different Sensations, which would render the Soul susceptible of as many different Passions.

It is also true, that if Musick can work Miracles, as is told of Pythagoras who by that means gave Health to the Sick: That Asclepiades the Physician cured phrenetick Persons, that a Player on Flutes put Alexander in

a Passion, another appeased furious Persons, and all this by the Power of certain Sounds, and the Force of different Accords which struck the Ear in such a Manner, that the Soul which Delights in Proportion and Likeness, was pleased with the Sounds of these Instruments, and with the Tones of the Voice where the Numbers are entire and harmonious. Thus in Painting, all the Beauty of which consists in Symetry and fine Proportion, if it be handled according to Nature, may raise in the Soul Sentiments of Joy and Delight as strong as Musick does : Since of all the Passions those that enter by the Eyes are the most violent : There are instances of as great Wonders performed by Painting

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ing, which have often been raised by the Imagination at the Sight of beautiful and deformed Objects, as any that are reported to have been done by Musick: One has only to find out different Modes in Painting for the Composition of Pictures and the Expression of Subjects, as the Ancients have done in Musick for different Recitals and Songs. We may observe three principal Ones, viz. the Dorian, the Phygian, and the Lydian, to which they afterwards added several others: One of them was used to sing the Praises of great Men, others inspired Courage, and animated them in Time of Battle; some were designed to beget Love, others raised Grief, and some excited Joy. As these dif-

ferent Modes sprung from the Manners and Customs of those who invented them, some of them were more moderate, as the Greeks, others more soft and effeminate as the Lydians; we may compare with the different Manners of Painting, what is observed in the Schools of Rome, Florence, and Lombardy, where the first preserves more Majesty and Grandeur, the second more of Fierceness and Motion, the last more of Harmony and Sweetness. But it must be acknowledged there is something singular and incomparable in Mr. Poussin, for having found out the Art to practice all the different Manners, he was so much Master of them, and has laid down so certain Rules for them

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them, that he has given his Pictures the Force to express what Sentiments he pleased, and to inspire the Soul of the Beholder, in the same Manner as in Musick these Modes which have been mentioned move the Passions. He has in this, even outdone the most famous ancient Painters, that in his Works are seen all the fine Expressions which do but meet in different Masters. For Timomachus was not remarkable except for Painting the most vehement Passions as an Ajax whom he has represented in Anger. Zeuxis knew how to express the softer Passions when he did that fine Picture of Penelope in whose Countenance was seen Modesty and Prudence. Clefles was principally remarkable

lvi P R E F A C E.

markable for Expressions of Grief, having painted a Man wounded and dying, with Characters so natural, that his Strength seemed to diminish gradually, and to shew how short Time he had to live. But as I have observed, Mr. Poussin was equally Master of all these Qualifications, and knew perfectly the Force and Extent of all the different Modes. Thus in his Picture of Pyrrhus he seems to have kept one Mode, which was to shew nothing but Fury and Anger; in that of Rebecca, all is gracious and delicate; in the Manna, we see nothing but Languor and Misery, in the Cure of the Blind, Joy and Admiration: and thus it is in all his other Pictures which are so admirably handled that
every

P R E F A C E. lvii

every Part expresses the Quality of his Subject, in the same Manner as in these Modes of Musick all the Sounds contribute to express Joy or Grief. And it is this which he called sometimes the Dorian Modes, when it treated of grave Subjects, at other Times the Lydian, when it painted Bacchanals, sometimes Lesbian, for magnificent Things, and at other Times Ionic, for soft and pleasant Subjects; thus giving them different Names according to the Difference of Subjects.

But as that which rendered these Modes capable to elevate or intimidate, to afflict or rejoice, was the Manner in which the Voices or Sounds
were

lviii PREFACE.

were ordered or combined, some of them were quick, others languid, some were grave, others sharp; and these striking the Ear differently, occasioned a more or less violent Emotion in the Soul. Thus Mr. Pouffin has represented his Figures with Actions stronger or weaker, and with more or less lively Colours according to the Subjects he handled; for having found the true Degrees of Force and Weakness which meet in Colours, he knew so well to use them, that in his Works we may see a harmonious Kind of Conduct as in Pieces of Musick. For when he has represented a sad and dismal Subject as in his Picture called the Plague in the King's Cabinet, all the Colours are smothered and half extinguished,

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extinguished, the Light weak, and the Motions of the Figures slow and enfeebled. But in that of Rebecca, which ought to have been graceful, he has employed none but lively Colours which are softly and insensibly lost in one another, and which he has mixed so finely as to ravish the Sight: The Actions are modest and peaceable, a Calm appears throughout, mixed with a becoming Joy, and in this we may say he has imitated the Ionic Mode which is elegant and agreeable. I should enlarge too far if at present I continued the Comparison of all the Manners of Painting with the different Kinds of Musick. 'Twill be sufficient to have said what I have observed of this great Painter, who has been an Ho-

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nour to the French Nation, and one of the strongest and greatest Genius's that has appeared in that Art: For nothing comes from his Pencil which is not performed with a profound Intelligence, and as he always carefully enquired after those things by which the greatest Masters have arrived to that Height of Science which has made them so famous, He has likewise rendered himself illustrious by the comprehensive Knowledge he acquired, and the inimitable Works he has left behind him.

Yet it must be owned that as these excellent Artists have communicated to other Painters the Manner in which they conducted their Studies; they
who

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who have not so fine an Imagination will be always walking in the Dark, if they do not find extraordinary Men who being born to judge of the greatest Works, and with a more enlightned and stronger Judgment discover what would otherwise lie buried in Dark-ness, and seem as it were to oblige Art and Nature to produce new Works. Such is He † whom the King has chosen to be intendant and orderer of all the great Works his Majesty has done, since one may say that in this famous Academy he is to the Painters and Sculptors what they themselves are to their Pencils and Chisels; that is, by the Thoughts he inspires them with, he makes them produce excellent Works in the same Way that they

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with

† The famous Mr. Colbert, a Native of Scotland.

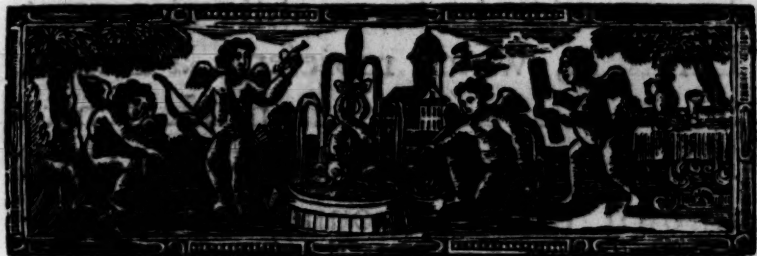
with their Colours and other Instruments produce fine Figures. He animates them to work by his Example, by his Assiduity in all his Employments, and discovers to them in themselves (if I may so speak) Treasures which they did not believe they were possessed of. This is what is so finely expressed, † that I cannot better conclude than by that Prophecy, which clearly points out to us what we now see accomplished under the Reign of the greatest Monarch upon Earth.

By Colbert's Genius led and prudent Thought;
 Now Arts shall shine to full Perfection brought:
 Colbert ordain'd t'inspect with guardian Eyes,
 And raise their bright'ning Glory to the Skies.
 His gen'rous Soul with every Goodness grac'd,
 Led by strong Sense and an unerring Taste;
 To such a Height his Counsels shall inspire,
 And swell the Artist's Breasts with such a Fire:
 That while his Order guides, Instruction warms,
 They'll breath o'er the Design such heav'nly Charms;
 That struck they'll view the glorious Wonder done,
 And scarce believe the Work to be their own.

F I R S T

† M. Perault.

(1)



F I R S T
C O N F E R E N C E

H E L D I N T H E
King's Cabinet of PAINTINGS,
SATURDAY, *May 7, 1677.*



ALL the Academicians and
most of the Students be-
ing met in the King's
Cabinet of Paintings,
the *St. Michael* of Ra-
phael was set before them in a favour-
able Light.

This

St. Michael

(2)

by Raphael

This Picture is eight Feet long and five broad : In the middle of a great Landskip, which represents a Desert, *St. Michael* descends from Heaven to Earth, having under him the Devil thrown to the Ground. This Angel is supported in the Air by two great Wings; he is cloathed with a Coat of Armour, made of Scales of Gold, which is tied with a Kind of Stuff of Gold after the Roman Manner, and reaches to his Knee; under that he has another Vestment of blue Stuff embroidered, opening a little, on which is written in Capital Letters, **RAPHAEL URBINAS PIN-
GEBAT, 1517.**

Above the Armour there is like two Scarfs of a changing Colour floating in the Air, one of the Ends of them are carried away with great Violence between the two Wings of the Angel, the other is buoyed up by its natural Lightness.

He

He has a Sword by his Side, and holds a half Pike in both his Hands, but having his right Arm a little raised up, his left Arm appears to be drawn under it, because the upper Parts of his Body advance more than the lower. His left Leg is bent, and though the right Leg seems placed upon the Demon, it does not touch him.

His Hair fluttering in the Air makes the same Motion as the Drapery. His Shoes or Sandals are of a changing Colour, like the Scarfs.

The Demon, who is under him, and as it were crushed, is biting his Tongue and grinding his Teeth, and in his red and flaming Eyes we see Marks of Rage and Fury. He is on the Brink of a Precipice, between two Rocks, from whence issue Flames of Fire. He has the Hoofs of a Goat, the Wings of a Dragon, and a Serpent's Tail: He supports himself with
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the left Hand upon the Earth, and holds in his right Hand an iron Hook instead of a Sceptre, which is the fatal Ensign of his cruel Dominion over other Demons.

Mr. *le Brun*, who was commanded to make Remarks on this Picture, observed first the Disposition of the Figure of the Angel, which is so much the more worthy to be considered, that it represents a Body supporting itself in the Air, and in a manner very difficult to be painted.

He shewed through all the Parts of the Body a most agreeable Contrast; for though the Face be fronting us, the fore Parts of the Body do not appear. The right Shoulder is drawn back, and the left coming forwards, only discovers the upper Part of the Stomach.

Below the left Arm we see all the Belly, the right Thigh and Leg, which are full in View, and stretching down-

downward have a Motion contrary to the right Arm which is lifted up, and that of the other Leg which is bended and drawn back.

The Demon is placed with equal Art, his Body is thrown down on the Earth, and appears as it were crushed by the Power of the Angel. All the Members of his Body seem broken and bruised, as Mr. *Le Brun* observed particularly of his Neck, for his Face is turned about on his Shoulders.

After the Disposition, he observed the Drawing of the Figures in all their Parts; how admirably *Raphael* had finished even the minutest Things, but above all, how correct he was in Design, as we may be surpris'd to observe as well in the *Contours* of all the Members, as in the Arms and Hands, Legs and Feet, where through a fresh and solid Body, we see the Muscles in their natural Position.

As one of the greatest Difficulties in Painting is to form the Outlines well, *Raphael* has been careful to

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make

make them exact and correct, after the Example of the fine ancient Painters, who were so exact as to mark out even the least Members of a Body, to the End that a Picture may appear with the greater Advantage, when the Circumscription of the Lines (if I may use the Word) discover the true Shape of a Body. In this Particular, this great Painter has behaved with so much Discernment, and in so singular a Manner, that without diminishing in the least the Force of his principal *Contours*, he could give Beauty and Strength to all his Figures, even the most remote in the Piece, without any Hardness or Dryness, though that be the Fault, he seemed to lean to in some of his Works, which is owing to his great Precision in drawing Outlines, of which he was so passionate an Admirer.

Although it seems in painting Angels, who are Beings quite spiritual, one ought to give them a delicate Shape, and under the Bodies they are painted

ed with to exhibit that Sort of Beauty which the ancient Sculptors have so well represented in the Figure of the antique *Apollo*; yet Mr. *Le Brun* observed that *Raphael* being to paint St. *Michael* in that Action, which expresses the Authority and Power of God, he has given him a masculine and vigorous Beauty: For the Features of his Face, and the Carnation resemble the Delicacy and Freshness of a young Man, together with a Force and Majesty, which expresses something powerful and divine, giving the Joints and Members extraordinary Strength, particularly the Arms, Knees and Fingers, which are firmly knit together by strong Nerves, like those in the most robust Bodies.

Never Painter knew how to express a Subject with more Grandeur than *Raphael*: As fierce and as terrible as the Visage of St. *Michael* appears, there is at the same Time a great Deal of Sweetness in it, and Grace withal. What Mr. *Le Brun* observed, dis-

covered the Excellence of it the more. For the Nose being large above, and a little thinner below, discovers the Majesty which shines throughout the whole Countenance, the Forehead large and open in the Middle is the Seat as it were of the Greatness of his Spirit and his Wisdom.

We see a half Tinct between the Eyebrows to shew a Disposition to elevate them, or to let them fall on the *Eyes*, as commonly happens to Persons capable of great Cares, and trusted with important Affairs, and which also appears when one is in a Passion. But this is only given him to prevent the Face being too smooth. For that Part is without any Motion, the Angel despising his Enemy whom he has overthrown, too much to shew any violent Efforts to conquer him. This *Raphael* has admirably represented by a certain Air of Disdain, which appears in his Eyes and Mouth: For his Eyes are a little open, and the Eyebrows forming perfect Arches are a
Sign

Sign of Tranquillity, and even the Mouth where the upper Lip comes a little over the lower, is also another Sign of his Contempt.

We may not only perceive Action in all Parts of the Body, but the Painter has even put the Things about him in Agitation likewise, that there might be more Motion in his Picture.

Mr. *Le Brun* having made them observe how the Air, pressed by the Weight of the descending Body, lifts at the same Time every Thing that is light, and drives it violently wherever it finds Passage; likewise remarked, that not only the Angel's Hair stands on End, towards the Opening of his Wings, where the Wind passes with great Violence, but the Scarfs which are about him flutter from one Side to another with such Exactness, that the Extremities of that which appears heaviest descends most, while the other is buoyed up in the Air.

Draperies

Draperies disposed in this Fashion are admirable Secrets to set off the Motion and Action in a Figure, and in this *Raphael* has surpassed all other Painters, having never omitted any thing which might contribute to the best Expression of a Subject.

After *M. le Brun* had made these Remarks, he begged the Company to give their several Opinions of the Picture, and submitted his own Sentiments to those of the Academy. But every Body was of his Opinion, and found nothing that could be contradicted of all that he had said, but owned that his Remarks were made with a great Deal of Judgment.

There was one however, who after acknowledging the great Merit of *Raphael*, undertook to shew that this Picture was not faultless; and to prove his Assertion, he laid *it down* as a Maxim, that in any Member of the the Body, one side of it cannot be swelled but the opposite side must not

not only be diminished in its bulk, but also withdrawn, and make a quite contrary Appearance; so that in a Leg or an Arm, the Outlines ought to be drawn in such a Manner, that their Roundness and Swellings may not be opposite to each other.

But he pretended that the upper and lower Part of St. *Michael's* Right Arm was drawn in such a Manner that the Outlines which ought to have been different by a swelling appearing in the upper Part are entirely equal, and that the lower Part which should have been diminished in Proportion as the upper Part was augmented, had as much Force and Roundness as the Part which was opposite to it: So that (said he) the Outlines of this Arm, whose Muscles should have appeared in one Part more than another, are drawn by equal Lines like those which compose an Egg.

This Remark which surpris'd all the Company, and seem'd to be of
great

great Importance, roused their Attention, and they all viewed the Picture again, to see if they could discover what had not yet been attended to.

Every one drew near in order to observe more exactly, and after all, they were of Opinion that nothing in the Design appeared to be as was alledged. One of the Assembly observed most justly, that as some Painters charge some Parts of their Work very much either in the Outlines, the Expressions or Mixture of Colours, one must not be surpris'd if he do not sometimes see even in their most finished Pieces, that insensible Diminution, and that artful Conduct by which they pass from one Part to another, which is the great and admirable Secret of the Art.

Now it is true, that *Raphael* was a great Master in this, nay so great that few have been able to imitate him herein. So far then were they from owning any Fault in this Picture

ture, that this Objection gave occasion to admire it the more, and made *M. le Brun* enter into a more strict Examination of the several Parts that had been omitted formerly, where he discovered Beauties which are not to be found any where else.

Mr. *Perault*, to oblige the Company to tell their Sentiments, asked if it were true, that Nature was so regular in the Construction of all the Parts of the human Body, that we can find no Member thereof, the Outlines of which may not form two Lines which will appear somewhat round? And if this be an Observation which is made upon the Ancients, and on the Pictures of the best Painters? Every one having told their Opinion, they all agreed that in the Shape of the human Body, we do not find that Nature has been so exact as to make an Irregularity in the *Contours*, but on the contrary, that we may observe in fine Bodies, and particularly in the most fleshy

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Members,

Members, as the Arms and Thighs of Children and well made Women, a Roundness and Equality which entirely destroys the general Proposition that had been advanced.

That these unequal Swellings ought to be considered with Regard to the Members where the Nerves and Muscles appear when they are in Motion, because then, if we Force the Flesh to one side they grow bigger by that Effort, and at the same time diminish the opposite Part ; but that also there often happen certain Actions, where these swellings appear all over the Arm which is full of Muscles and Nerves. And though their Ligaments do not always meet in the same Place, the Arm may nevertheless be so disposed, that it will often happen, these swellings may be opposite to one another. This was often confirmed by Examples taken from Pictures of the best Masters in the King's Cabinet, all which were then

then examined to solve the Question proposed.

As *Raphael* knew well how to paint these Swellings of the Muscles and Nerves where they happen in Nature, he has not failed likewise to draw them with Sweetness and Grace where it ought to be, and to temper whatever seems too hard and dry, with something more tender and delicate.

We know that all Painters have not worked in so perfect a Manner, and that many of them have never dreamed of learning more than one single Branch of the Art. Thus in their Pictures we may see Figures which either move unseasonably, or are in too great Repose. Every thing appears either mute or crying, and when they would give a great Degree of Union to their Colours, there is no Variety of Tints.

Raphael had such an universal Knowledge and Judgment that he was never guilty of any of these

Faults, as any one of but a moderate Knowledge if he has but good Eyes may easily know.

Not but that it is true, as one must have a good Genius and Learning withal to be able to produce a finished Piece, it is also necessary he be endued with a good Share of Discernment to judge of all the Beauties which contribute to this Perfection. The School of *Florence* formerly taught their Pupils to give more Motion to their Pictures; in disposing them, her Advice was, that all the Members should make a Contrast that might form a pyramidical Figure moving like Flame, believing that by thus imitating the Motion of Fire, they would add more of Action to the Person represented. These Lessons have given occasion to many Painters (who have followed them too exactly) to produce very extravagant Compositions, and such as were quite opposite to the School of *Rome*, whose Precepts were more judicious.

This

This is the Reason why some on hearing them speak of the pyramidal Motion of the Members, have imagined that their Outlines ought always to be sunk in the Parts opposite to those which are elevated ; but if they had studied Anatomy rightly, they would have seen what way the Nerves and Muscles swell or diminish, and that their Appearances are very different as the Body is lean or fleshy.

Besides this we must consider the Action of the Figure, for it is certain that in lifting up the Arm, and holding a Javelin, one does not see so strong an Appearance of Nerves as if it was pushing or drawing any Thing with great Force.

Mr. *le Brun* desired them likewise to observe the admirable Conduct of *Raphael* in the Colouring of his Picture. The better to represent in this Angel a Body suitable to an active and happy Spirit, it seems he has only made use of three Colours to represent

present Action, and to place it favourably to the Light and Air, for on the Wings and their Drapery, and even on the Carnations we see the yellow and white Predomine.

He also took notice that the upper Part of the Angel's Body was more enlightened than the lower, because the upper Part is only environed with Air, and the lower is opposed to the Earth, and to the Pieces of the Rocks which are so dark that they serve for the Ground.

For this Reason, the Demon who is crushed on the Rocks participates so much with them of their Tints : And what is most wonderful in that Figure is, that what appears most deformed thro' all the Angel's Body is nevertheless a great Beauty in the Composition of the Picture.

Mr. *le Brun* observed further as a Thing of great Importance, and well worthy Attention, that the Demon seems to be crushed in such a Manner, that if we observe the State and Disposition

tion he is in, we see him oppressed as it were under a Burden of an extraordinary Weight: Mean time *St. Michael* who is the only Weight which keeps him down, does not touch him with the Point of his Foot. So that one must enter into the Painter's Thought to be able to find out that the Cause of so terrible Oppression is an Effect of Power Divine, which working in an invisible and spiritual Manner, discovers itself, and produces these Effects on visible Bodies.

Mr. *le Brun* having finished his Remarks, and answered some Questions of small Importance which were proposed about the Picture, the Company proposed Mr. *Bourdon* as one of the senior Rectors to make choice of a Subject for the first *Saturday* of next Month: But he excused himself in such a Manner that the Academy dispensed with him. Then they begged Mr. *de Champagne* the Elder to take that Trouble upon him, which he willingly did; and
having

having chose out of the King's Pictures one of those done by *Titian*, he desired they should meet again in the same Place on the first *Saturday* of *June*.

Second CONFERENCE

Held in the King's Cabinet of Paintings on Saturday, June 4, 1667.

THE Picture which was chosen for the Subject of this Conference was one of *Titian's*, who on a Canvass of four Feet and a half long, and six Feet and a half broad, has painted the Body of our Saviour carried to his Tomb by *St. John*, *Nicodemus*, and *Joseph of Arimathea*, accompanied by the Virgin, and *Mary Magdalen*.

Mr. *de Champagne* the Elder who had been appointed to display the Beauties of this Piece, began by telling them that it was not to be doubted but it was really done by the
Hand

Hand of *Titian*, and that it was one of the finest and best preserved Pictures of that excellent Hand ; that it was done with so much Art and Fire, that we may easily judge it had been finished in the Strength and Vigour of his Age, while he painted with the greatest Freedom, and before the vast Intelligence he had acquired began to decline.

There was in that Work, he said, many Parts which well deserved to be examined, but that leaving for the present those of *Ordonnance* and *Design*, he would confine himself to speak of the Expression only, and observe with what Art the Painter had conducted himself in the Distribution of Colours and Lights, in which one may justly say he has far surpassed all other Painters.

As *Christ* is the principal Figure to which all the others are subordinate, Mr. *de Champagne* observed that all the Characters of a dead Body meet here ; all the Members appear

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heavy and without Motion, and the Want of Blood and Life makes them pale and livid, so that the Flesh and Veins, Muscles and Nerves, which in a living Body appear firm and round, are here inert, flat, and sunk: Then he desired them to observe in what manner the Body is disposed; the Legs and Feet are advanced, and the Head and Shoulders thrown at a Distance. *Titian* has supposed that the Shaddow of one of those who are carrying the Body must cover part of it, particularly the Face, thus to throw the Head at a Distance, and bring forward the Legs; the better to imprint the Character of Death on every Member of the Body of which Shades and Darknes are a proper Emblem: And to order it so, that in the Obscurity of the Colours, we may not see the adorable Face of the Saviour of the World, who appears now no more with those Beauties, which when he was alive, made him be
looked

looked upon as the most beautiful of all Mankind.

He observed, that as the Body was represented bloodless and lifeless, they who carry it discover by their Actions, and the Colours of their Flesh how deeply they are affected, and the Pain they endure in supporting the Weight of the Body. *St. John* is behind him who is lifting up the Shoulders, and the two other Disciples, one on each Side of him bearing up the rest of the Body; one of them is cloathed in a Garment of a very clear and lively brick Colour, but as it is tucked up, we may see the foldings of it which are of a Colour changing with red and green. He has likewise a Kind of Scarf about his Shoulders of white Cotton strip'd with blue.

As to the Figure which holds our Saviour's Feet, and whose Shadow falls upon the Body, it is clad in green. The Virgin has a blue Mantle about her, and though we have only a side View of her we

may observe in her Face signs of excessive Grief.

Mary Magdalen is painted struggling between two violent Passions, for she appears grieved to the very Soul for the Death of her Saviour, whom she is looking upon, and in whom her Life seems to be so bound up, as if she would depart and follow the divine Object of her Love to the Sepulchre. But the Tenderness and Compassion she feels for the Mother of this beloved Spouse, keeps her behind, in order to assist her: so that if with her Eyes and Heart she follows the Body which they are carrying to the Tomb, she is otherwise taken up about the afflicted Mother, whom she embraces and supports, for Fear she should faint away.

The Sentiments of *St. John* are much like those of *Magdalen*, we see Sorrow painted in his Face, and his Heart pierced with no less Grief than hers. He is busy carrying the
Body

Body of his divine Master, but yet looks back to the Virgin whose Distress adds to his own, and raises in him a greater Degree of Affliction.

There does not appear in the Faces of *Nicodemus* and *Joseph* of *Arimatea* such a violent Grief, because they had not received such strong Testimonies of our Saviour's Love as *St. John* and *Mary Magdalen*. Yet they appear very much grieved, and we see that it is with a Zeal and Affection full of Respect, that they perform the last Duty to the Body of *Christ*.

Mr. de Champagne made several Remarks on the other Parts of this Picture, observing first the Beauty of the Tints which appeared in the Naked, and the Dispositions of Colours so finely laid on one after another in the Draperies, either to sink the remote Parts, or bring out those that are near, and withal to express that Harmony of Colours which is so admirable in the Works of *Titian*.

Then

Then he let them see the vast Art of the Painter in distributing of Lights and Shades: the Academy pointing out certain Glances of Light, and some Flashes in the Heaven behind *St. John* and about the Head and Arms of *Christ*, which being of an obscure Teint, make the Brightness of the Heaven and the Force of the Light appear to the greater Advantage; he desired them to observe how that Brightness which naturally ought to strike strongest, is nevertheless so well placed, that the dark Bodies hinder it from advancing, and that those Lights are at a Distance where they naturally ought to be. From hence we may learn, that when the Colours are well used, the Light and Dark are sometimes nearer, and sometimes at a Distance; and that this is the best Manner of disposing a Subject well: The Light and Shades contribute very much to the strengthening or weakening the Colours, and are of great Use

Use either to bring out or set off a Body.

At last they all agreed, that with regard to that Part of painting, *Titian* was a perfect Master; and that in his Pictures we may chiefly observe how artfully he manages the Force of Colours to make the Shades and half Tints set off the great Lights with the better Advantage: But above all, with what skill he strengthens his Lights in order to add the greater Beauty to his Picture, and that without letting one Part efface another; or one Colour diminish another.

Some of the Company moved to examine the Parts of the Design of this Picture, where they said, there was Ground of Objection against the Figure of *St. John*, and that of our Saviour; one they alledged was too small and the other too large in Proportion to the other Figures, and blamed *Titian* for having represented the Head of *Christ* in so great a Shade; a Part of his Body, which seemingly ought to.

to have been most enlightened and appeared to the best Advantage, as it is considered to be the principal Object in the Picture.

To this it was answered, that as *Titian* had not been equally Master in all the Parts of Painting, they must confine themselves to those in which he had excelled, and which Mr. *de Champagne* had pointed out with great Discernment; and adding their Sentiments to all that had been said, they owned that what was chiefly to be admired in the Piece, was the Colouring, and the fine Harmony of Parts. And that this Harmony proceeded from the Arrangement of the Colours; thus we may observe that if *Titian* has cloathed one of them who are carrying the dead Body in red, it is to make the Body appear paler, and that the Head and Shoulders may seem to be at the greater Distance. And because our Saviour's Legs are enlightened, he has given the

Figure

Figure who supports them a Garment of dark Green for a Ground.

We may further observe the Difference between the Carnation in the Body of Christ, and that of the Disciples who are carrying it, which *Titian* has express'd by a stronger Colour more inclining to the Red, and the Linnen which is wrapp'd about his Legs and Feet, serves by its Whiteness to make them appear of a fainter and dead-like Colour, and to come out quite from the Picture. But above all we may observe with what Sweetness and Tenderneſs the Painter has united his Colours; for between that green Habit and the Virgin's blue Mantle, we ſee *Mary Magdalen's* Robe which is yellow, but the Browns of it are broken and tainted with the different Colours which ſurround her; and thus one Colour does not fall immediately from green to blue, or from green to yellow; for though *Mary Magdalen's* Sleeve be of a deep Yellow and near the green Habit of *Nicodemus*, *Titian*

E has

has known well how to separate these colours by tucking up *Nicodemus's* Sleeve against the Yellow, and to make the Shades of the one fall into those of the other, so as the Colours do not cut upon those which have an equal Share of Light and Vivacity : always observing this Maxim which was peculiar to him, to make great Masses of Light and Shade.

Further it is to preserve this same Harmony of Colours and this fine Union of Tints, that he has given *St. John* a red Mantle heighten'd with a little of the yellow upon the light Parts ; for thus it agrees well with the green Habit of *Nicodemus* ; and makes an agreeable Harmony with *Magdalen's* Robe, and likewise with the red Vestment of *Joseph of Arimathea* ; and which is more, serves to set off *Christ's* Arm which is above it.

The Virgin's blue Robe is tinted in the Shades with a little Red, and all the extreme Parts of the Body have some Tincture of the Ground.

As

As to the Expression in the Faces, the Academy added to all that *M. de Champagne* had said, that we may observe in order to make the Virgin appear with that Sort of Grief, and that extreme Love which does not quite overpower her as it commonly happens in other great Afflictions but makes her out do herself to follow with her Mind and Body, the Corps of her dear Son whom she sees carrying to the Grave ; we must (I say) observe that all the Treats of her Face seem to follow the Object to which she is so closely attached ; for her Eyes stand out, and her Eyebrows are erect, her Nose and Mouth stretched out as if she was drawn along by the dead Body.

Magdalen bears likewise visible Signs of the Grief with which she is touched : we observe it chiefly in her Eyebrows cast down and half covering her Eyes, in her Hair disheveled and hanging down carelessly on her Shoulders ; and finally
in

in her Action which has no other Object but the divine Body which is carried to the Tomb.

The Eyes of St. *John* are also cast down and red with Grief, but the Sorrow he feels on seeing the Virgin so much afflicted appears more in his Face by certain Folds form'd by his Eyebrows, by being drawn near to one another, and so raised up at the two Extremities.

After the Company had made all these particular Remarks, they deliberated on the Subject of their next following Assembly, and Mr. *Van Opstal* being desired to give his Opinion in some Piece of Sculpture, he made choice of the Figure of *Lacoon*.*

in the garden of
Belvedere.

Third CONFERENCE.

*Held in the Academy Saturday
July 7th 1667.*

ALtho' Mr. *Van Opstal* who was to open the Conference, had ordered nothing to be brought

into

* The Work of

Agasander,

Polydorus &

Athenodorus.

Natives of the Isle of Rhodes.

Lin. Nat. hist.

into the Academy but the Figure of *Lacoon* made of Plaister and about 18 Inches high without his Children, he found Subject enough to entertain the Assembly, and to discover beauties which are very difficult to be met with in other Works of Sculpture.

He examined all the Parts of this Figure in order to shew the Excellence of it : and observed with what Art the Sculptor had given it a large Breast and Shoulders, all the Parts of which are expressed with a great deal of Exactness and Tendernefs. He also took Notice of the Height of the Hips, and the Nervousness of the Arms: the Legs neither too thick nor too lean but firm and well muscled ; and in general he observed that in all the other Members, the Flesh and Nerves were expressed with as much strength and sweetness as in Nature herself, but in Nature well formed.

He

He said that if we do not observe in this Statue that fine Contrast of Members which Artists make use of designedly to give a finer Action to their Statues, 'tis because it only makes a Groupe with two others which go along with it in the Original, its Attitude and whole Disposition of the Body help to make the Contrast with the two other Figures which are at its Sides. This they would be fully satisfied of when they saw them all three together. He observed nevertheless that there was in the Members of *Lacoon* a fine Diversity of Action and very conformable to the Subject.

He did not forget to shew likewise the strong Expressions which appear in this admirable Figure, where Grief is not only diffused over the Face, but also over all the other Parts of the Body, and to the Extremities of the Feet, the Toes of which violently contract themselves.

As

As every thing about this Statue is contrived with surprizing Art, every one will own that it ought to be the chief study of Painters and Sculptors : But which they should not consider chiefly as a Model that only serves to design by ; they ought to observe exactly all the Beauties, and imprint on their Minds an Image of all that is excellent in it : because it is not the Hand only that is to be employed if one desires to make himself perfect in this Art, but Judgment to form these great Ideas and Memory carefully to retain them.

But as those strong Expressions cannot teach one to design after a Model, † because we cannot put such a Person in a State where all the Passions are in him *at once*, and it is likewise difficult to copy them in Persons who are really active because of the quick Motion of the Soul : It is therefore of great Importance for Artists to study Causes, and then to try with how great Dignity they

* A Man who serves for a Model in the Academy

they can represent their Effects; and we may averr that it is only to these fine Antiques they must have recourse since there they will meet with Expressions which it will be difficult to draw after Nature.

Of all the Ancient Statues which remain to this Day, there is none, equal to that of *Lacoon* in the Pope's Palace at *Belvidere*. It is a Master-piece of Art, and has been the Admiration of past Ages as well as it is of the present ; for ever since *Pliny's*(a) Time it has been looked upon as the most perfect Piece which was in *Rome*.

This excellent Piece in which (b) three of the most famous *Grecian* Statuaries displayed all their Skill and discovered the Secrets of their Art, was found under the Ruins of *Vespasian's* Palace ; and since that Time has been carefully preserved, and served as a Model to the most eminent Sculptors and most excellent Painters

(a) *Pliny* lib. 36. cap. 5

(b) *Agessander*, *Polydore* and *Albeodore*.

Painters, who with good reason have made it their particular Study, since it is from it they may learn true Drawing and how to represent a natural Beauty. The Outlines in it are better expressed than in any of the ancient Statues.

Every one will agree that it is from this Model we may learn to correct the Faults which are commonly found in Nature; for here all appears in a State of Perfection, and such it seems Nature observes in all her Works if she does not meet with something which hinders her from giving them a perfect Form.

It was also acknowledged, that what has made this Statue so celebrated, is the profound Skill the Artists have shewn in representing so well all the Marks by which we may know the high Birth of him for whom the Piece was designed, and the true Condition he was in, when he was devoured by the Serpents, which coming out of the midst

of the Sea, flung themselves upon him and his two Children.

As every one was giving his Opinion of this admirable Piece, he told them that *Lacoon* being the Son of King *Priam* and Queen *Hecuba* ; we cannot imagine a Body which agrees better with his Age and Birth. Here the Nerves and Muscles are not too big and swelling or have too much Force as in the *Hercules* of *Farnese*, because this Prince who was a Priest of *Apollo*, had neither the Constitution of *Hercules*, nor is he employed in hard and severe Labour, so that there was no occasion to represent him either so Strong, or so Vigorous. Nor have they given him the same Proportions as are observed in the Figure of *Apollo*, for there one may see a Grace and Majesty, which shew it was a God they intended to represent, and that all the Members are rather drawn to express the extraordinary Beauty and Image of a Deity than the Body of a Man, whose

whose Members have more need of Strength than Beauty for the necessary Employments of Life.

The next Observation they made on this Statue, was, that he is represented as a Man perfectly well made, but advanced in Age and a Man of Quality : so that we may look upon it as a finished Pattern of a natural Body, and that a fine One. This is observed with great Exactness throughout all the Members which are neither too strong nor too weak, but there appear Muscles and Nerves sufficient to support the Flesh, which as it covers them agreeably, adds to the Beauty of the Figure, so that there is no dryness in any of the Parts, and yet they bear a just Resemblance to the Complexion of a Man come to age, and in whom Nature does no longer preserve the same Freshness which is only to be found in youthful Bodies.

His Stature is tall, great and noble, the Hair of the Head, which is almost round,

round, represents all the Qualities of a Person of Condition : his Nose is square, and Forehead large ; his Eyes large and well cut, his Mouth of a moderate Bigness ; and if the Motions occasioned by grief had not changed all the Features of his Face, we might see the finest and most natural Marks of a Man of Quality.

And because long and robust Arms (c) Elbows firmly jointed (d) are Signs of a Person of probity, and strong and nervous Legs (e) denote a Man of Courage, the Artist who cut this Statue of *Lacoon* has not failed to give him the Characters suitable to him he intended to represent.

All the other Parts of the Body are formed with equal Judgment, and serve well to express the principal Design, which was not to exhibit a simple Expression of Grief, but truly to represent a Man of high Birth
and

(c) *Polemen Adamantius-*

(d) *Aristotle.*

(e) *Ibid*

and great Merit, *in that Condition*; his Hands and Feet large nervous and articulated, are a Sign of one naturally strong and of a fine Spirit. (e) The Hips high, and the Chest large, and broad Shoulders are likewise signs of great Courage and a Man of Worth.

And yet though all these Things are worthy of consideration, nothing seems to deserve our Admiration so much as the sorrowful Expression which the Painter has represented with so much Intelligencethroughout all the Body of this Figure. We may observe in it the Effects of the strongest Passions which Man is capable of feeling, expressed in so moving a Manner, that it rather appears like an animated Body than a Figure of Marble.

As it represents the State *Lacoon* was in, when he and his Children were surpriz'd by the Serpents who twined themselves so fast about them that they had not time to fly, nor strength

(e) *Adamantius*

Sculptor.

strength to defend themselves ; 'twas necessary that the Sculptor should express the different Passions with which this unfortunate Prince was attacked all at once ; and these Passions could not be represented but by the Impressions they are capable of making on the Body that feels them.

But it being probable that Horror, Fear, Sorrow, Grief and Despair seized him all together, and in the same Moment caught hold of the Soul of *Lacoon*, when he saw himself in so miserable a State, all these different Passions ought to be expressed in this Figure. And as 'tis impossible to see all these Effects at once in Nature, it must be very difficult to imagine them justly, and still more so to represent them well with the Chisel. They shewed next how all these Changes which may happen in so surprising an Action ; and all the Motions which so strong Passions are capable of producing
on

on a human Body, are exprest in this Figure in an admirable Manner. 'Tis said, that the two Serpents which come in *Lacoon's* Sight and fasten upon him, are the first Cause of all the Passions with which he seems to be agitated ; because so frightful an Object having been represented to his Soul by means of the animal Spirits which paint in his Brain every thing that might hurt him, it likewise puts his Spirits in motion, and they move all the Members which may be necessary to defend him from the imminent Danger.

Thus by the Arms and Legs of this Figure it appears that it defends itself from the two Serpents, and squeezing them in its Hands, endeavours to get rid of them. But as its Efforts are in vain, the Soul which is seized with Horror and Despair, imprints other Marks on the Face. And because it is in the Brain that the Spirits work most by the different Motions given them by that Gland,

is the Seat of the Soul, and which makes them work the Nerves in as many different Manners as it feels different Passions, accordingly the Parts of the Face being nearest the Brain, are more suddenly changed. For the Spirits being moved and heated pass immediately from the Nerves to the Muscles, and in filling them in an unusual Manner, swell and contract them; hence it is that the Nose, Mouth and the Eyebrows retire and the Eyes offended with the Object presented to them, raise themselves and turn aside.

He added that these same animal Spirits passing through the Nerves and Muscles of the Body, raise them up, and appear more toward the Stomach, and the other Parts which are commonly agitated by violent Passions, and as they reach even to the Extremity of the Feet, the Toes of this Figure are contracted, so that there is not one single Part in the whole Body which does not discover the Distress and violent Motion

tion which a Man must feel in such Circumstances.

The better to discover what has happened in the Face and other Members of this Statue, the Nerves and Muscles make the principal Appearances in it, and because the Flesh is sunk, and even the Veins almost empty and less apparent, they say that Fear and Sadness, joined to excessive Grief, straiten the Passages of the Heart, make the Blood flow more slowly in the Veins, and becoming cold and more dense, takes up much less room.

Besides this, all the Blood of the Body retiring through fear to the Places adjacent to the Heart, the Members which are deprived of it become pale, and the Flesh less firm particularly the Face, where the Change is so much more visible as the Fear is greater, or unforeseen, and that thus as the Members grow cold for Want of Blood, his Head declines on his Shoulders, which
equally

equally discovers his Weakness and Grief, as it does the Action of a Man overwhelmed with Misery, who would implore the Assistance of Heaven.

In a Word this is so accomplished a Statue, that every one owned it is from this Model that the School of *Rome*, which has produced so great Masters have drawn as from a pure Fountain, the greatest Part of their fine Ideas. And the Painters who have wrought since the Time of *Raphael* and *Julius Romanus* have constantly consider'd it and made it their principal Study ; which gave Occasion to this Joke of *Titian's*, when he was at *Rome* : for like all other Painters of *Lombardy*, he was more in love with the Beauty of Colours than the greatness of Design, and laughing at the *Roman* Painters for having so particular a Regard to this Statue, he resolved to cut one like it in Wood, where under the Figure of an Ape with
her

her two young Ones, he represented *Lacoon*: Intending by this, to shew that the Painters who attached themselves so much to this Statue, were but like so many Apes, who instead of producing any thing of their own only imitated what others had done before them.

If the Figure which was shewn in the Academy had been like the Original, one might find Subject of Entertainment for a much longer Time, and with more Pleasure and Utility, but as from so small a Copy, one can have but a faint Idea of the Beauties of the Original, they contented themselves with observing what was most obvious, referring to another Time the full Examination of all the three Figures which compose this Groupe.

They begged Mr. *Mignard* to make choice of a Picture in the King's Cabinet for the Subject of their next Assembly which he did by pitching upon

upon one of those done by *Raphael*.

As the Academy was to be much busied about pressing Affairs in the Month of *August*, the Conferences were put off till the first *Saturday* of *September*.

Fourth CONFERENCE.

Held in the King's Cabinet of Paintings on Saturday the 3d of September 1667.

MR. *Mignard* who had pitched upon the Picture where *Raphael* has painted (*f*) the Virgin holding the Infant *Jesus* over his Cradle and around him *St. John*, *St. Elizabeth*, *St. Joseph* and two Angels, said to the Company, he saw so many Beauties in this Work, that he knew not which of them to fix on in the beginning of his Discourse.

But

(*f*) It is 6 Feet and half high and 4 feet and half broad.

But as indeed he found nothing so admirable in it as the Grandeur of Expression, and that it is this Part chiefly by which *Raphael* has particularly deserved the Name of *Divine*, he found himself engaged first to consider how this great Painter had impressed on every one of his Figures, Characters so suitable to the Persons represented, and so proportioned to the Sanctity of his Subject.

He then observed how much Modesty and Respect appeared in the Countenance and Face of the Virgin, and her passionate Love of her Son, and his tender Affection toward her. The Veneration of *St. Elizabeth*, and the profound Humility of the little *St. John*. The resting posture of *St. Joseph*, and the Joy accompanied with Admiration so well expressed in the Faces of the two Angels.

In this Picture, he said we may observe the Correctness and great Judgment of *Raphael*, considering
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how he has managed this peice, and the Choice he has made of all the finest Things to compose his Subject.

If he has been carefull to enliven them by the Force of Expression, he has neglected nothing else that was necessary to the entire perfection of his Work. We see this by the Beauty of his Ordonance, as his chief Intention was to place the Figures according to their Dignity, by putting the Infant *Jesus* in the middle, and the Virgin in the second Place.

He also observed, that though the Figures were all attentive to one single Subject, and fixed on beholding the Infant, there is not one of them however, whose Face is not placed to the greatest Advantage, and every Part in the most agreeable Manner.

He shewed that as by means of the Lights and Shades, he had not only given Force or Weakness to all

on

the Bodies ; but further had likewise made the Light fall with more Strength and Beauty on the principal Figures, having spread it more strongly on the Body of the Infant, and after that upon the others, with so much Discernment, that they receive only as much as is necessary to produce the Effect which his Subject demands.

But above all, he took Notice that to make the Figure of the divine Infant the more remarkable, *Raphael* has shunned all the Accidents which might interrupt the Rays of Light, and throw shade upon him ; being unwilling there should be any Obscurity on him who is the Fountain of all Light.

The other Figures do not receive their Light the same Way, it diminishes in proportion to their Distance either by throwing them at a Distance by a just Degradation of the Lights, or by diminishing the Magnitudes of the Figures. Not that these Bodies are without great Lights, on the con-

trary, there are in some Places great Masses of Light, but with a less Degree of Force in the distant Parts than in those that are nearer. For Mr. *Mignard* shewed that all the Heights of the Figures were strongly enlightened, particularly the Shoulder and Sleeve of St. *Elizabeth*, the Arm and Robe of the Virgin, and also the other great Parts : which did not only add very much Softness to all this great Work, but made all the Masses stand at a due Distance and kept them from destroying one another, as happens when there are a great number of Parts enlightened or shaded either in the Carnations or Draperies.

He even observed that though there are many Foldings in the clothing of the Figures, they are yet dispos'd with so much Judgment, and so well understood, that those which are in the great enlightened Parts have not strong Shades, and those which are in places deprived of
Light

Light do not come out of their Obscurity by strokes of Light, which would make them appear too much. That in all the Drapery *Raphael* has preserv'd Greatness and Nobleness so suitable to the Persons he is representing, that far from making any Confusion, or concealing the fine Proportions of Bodies, on the contrary he makes them appear with more Grace and Majesty: that he has artfully reserved the Foldings to fill up the Openings or void Places which they call Vacuities, and which occasion dryness in Pictures, when they are not very artfully managed; having scattered them so judiciously among his Figures, that we cannot say there is one which interferes with the Members, or maims them as we often see in other Works.

He shewed how this great Painter had followed in his Colouring the same Diminution of Force as in the Shades and Lights; and that the Figure of the Infant *Jesus* being the principal One in the Picture,
all

all the others are subordinate to it in the Beauty of colouring, the Freshness and Vivacity of which makes us immediately fix upon it as the principal Object: and that he might still the more attract the Eye to it, he has laid a Cushion upon the Cradle, the whiteness of which makes that place more enlightened, and strikes the Sight with the greater Force.

He desired them further to consider that the great Force in this Picture consists in the Lights and Shades and the Degradation of the Colours which the Painter has managed so artfully throughout all the Figures, the out Lines of which always lose themselves in the Dark, and on the Parts which serve for the Ground, without making use of too strong Reflections, which would have made the Work appear with much less Relief.

He avoided enlarging on any thing that respected the Drawing, be-

because *Raphael* had always excelled in that Part, and therefore there is no part of the Picture but what is admirable for the Beauty of Design. That it is from this great Man we may learn just and graceful Drawing without making these risings, which instead of adding force or greatness to a Figure or Member, make it appear dry and disagreeable. 'Tis very true he has been so jealous in precision of Design, and so careful to preserve it still entire, that some have even believed he falls a little into dryness. But we may say with more truth, that he has taken the Middle between the too soft and too musculous, the first of which is practised in the School of *Lombardy*, and the second in that of *Florence*. And leaving the dry Manner which he had learned under *Pietro Perugino*, he has been careful not to fall into the other Extreme in quitting the correct to apply himself to the colouring only, and a too delicate way of pencil

penciling which only serves to hide the Faults of Drapery. And surely there is so great a Difference between his Works and those of *Pietro Peraguino*, that one cannot enough admire the greatness of Genius in this incomparable Painter, when he considers how much he excelled his Masters in a short Time, and how he all at once carried the Art of Painting to so high a Pitch above what it had arrived at, that none has ever yet been able to rob him of the Glory of being the First and the Master of all Painters.

Mr. *Mignard* having ended speaking, entreated all them that were present to give their Sentiments on what he had remarked. One of the Company thought fit to object, that this Picture had been esteemed only because it had no Reflections, and said, that far from condemning them in a Piece, they ought to be carefully preserved in it : they en-
crease

crease the Beauty and Splendor of a Figure ; that *Titian* had thus observed them ; he whose Colours and Lights are so natural and so charming ; and that he thought this want of reflected Lights in *Raphael's* Picture was a Fault which could hardly be excused.

Mr. *Mignard* replied that so far are reflected Lights from being any Advantage to a Peice, that on the contrary they diminish its Force and make the Members of a Body too transparent : because being enlightened on one Side by an original Light, and on the other by a reflected one, and that even in places which ought to be shaded, they appeared as if they were in a manner a pellucid Substance, like Crystal where the light passes through, which instead of giving relief to Figures, make them weak and without roundness.

It is true we often see in Nature parts enlightened by reflected Lights,
and

and that Painters are even obliged to imitate these Natural Effects: but they ought to make a right Choice of these Accidents, and use them with so much Discretion, that a second Light may never diminish the Force of the original one, or take away any thing from the roundness of a Member.

Further we must consider, that *Raphael* having represented these Figures in a Room with one single Light, and which came from one Place only, there could not be Reflections on those Parts where the principal Lights did not fall; because the Parts which receive the whole Light cast a Shade upon those Parts which ought to make the Reflections. And in this *Raphael* has taken particular Care, in order to give the greater Force to his Figures by his Opposition of Lights and Shades.

When Mr. *Mignard* had made this reply to the Objection started the

the whole Academy supported his Opinion : and because this Gentleman, by bringing an Example from the Works of *Titian*, would infer, that he had imitated Nature more perfectly than *Raphael* ; they said, that if we are to value Pieces from the true and natural Representation of Things, we must not compare those of *Titian* with those of *Raphael*, since all that *Titian* aim'd at was the Beauty of Colours, and not to represent Objects regularly as they are : and that the latter, on the contrary, never had any other View, but to imitate Nature exactly in her finest Parts, of which he always made the most judicious and most advantagious Choice he could in order to give the more Strength, Majesty and Greatness to his Figures. And in this Work which they were examining, far from committing a Fault in not enlightening his Figures by Lights of Reflexion, he had shew'd the greatest

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Judgment and Knowledge in placing them; having put it in a Room where there would be but few, or no Reflexions, because these do not ordinarily happen, but when the Figures are placed in an open Light; for then, as all the Parts are surrounded, the Colours of every part reflect upon one another, so that those of the Draperies sometimes intermingle and even blend together against the Carnations. But it is so true that a close Room, which is only illuminated from one Place, ought not to have reflected Lights as in a Field; which *Leonardo de Vinci* reprehends as a great Stupidity in Painters, who, after having designed some Figure in their Room by one particular Light, do afterwards put that Figure into an Historical Composition, the Subject of which was done in the Field, or in a Place where all the parts of the Body have an universal Light; because what is done there will

will have stronger Shades than those that are done in the Field.

'Tis not that *Raphael* was ignorant of painting reflected Lights well, or that he has not represented them perfectly when he thought they were necessary to the Beauty of his works: But as there surely are certain Occasions in which they may diminish much of the Force and Grace of a Picture, he has known exactly how to shun these Occasions where he would have been forced to make use of them ; and it is for that Reason, that he has disposed the Figures in this admirable Picture in such a Manner, that the principal Light does not strike those parts which might reflect it upon the Members, which being enlighten'd on one Side, would in that case be enlighten'd a second time on the very parts which ought to be shaded. For if the Body or the Arm of the Infant, which receives the Light full on the right Side, had likewise another

ther Light of Reflexion on the left Side, it is certain that, instead of having the Force and *Relief* which the Light and Shade would give it, these parts, having too uniform a Teint, would appear much weaker, and lose of their Roundness.

Further, we must observe that the Light never spreads itself upon a Body, but at the same Time it carries along with it the Colours of the Objects by which it passes, or with which it is surrounded: thus when the Rays reflect upon one Body from another, they carry along with them the Colour of the first Body, which they mix with that of the second: in-
 somuch that if the Breast and Belly of the Infant had been strongly enlighten'd with Rays of Reflexion, that Light must come from the Virgin's Robe, which being of a very lively Red, and mixed with a reflected Light, the principal Ingredient of which is White, it would make it appear of a clear Red in the place
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where the Shades are ; which mixed with the natural Colour of the Carnation, instead of giving Roundness to the Body, it would make it of an equal Teint, and without *Relief*. 'Tis then for this reason that *Raphael* has shaded the *Virgin's* Clothes in the parts where, if they received any Light, they must reflect their Colours against the Carnation ; that none but that part of her Robe which covers her Knee, and which is most enlightened, rebounds some small Reflexions : but as this Robe is made of a Stuff which cannot reflect the Light with any great Force, the Reflexions are so sweet and tender, that one could hardly perceive them on the Body of the Infant, but by a small Teint inclining to Red, which appears on the Shades.

It would likewise be very strange to imagine that *Raphael* was capable of failing in this ; we must rather lay the blame upon Time, which indeed has effaced some of his

his softest Tints; and remember that the Black which was made use of, having surmounted the other Colours, has continued strongest, and hinders us now from seeing the Effects which they had on those Parts where the Light of the Draperies made any Reflexion.

Raphael, who had painted less in Oyl than in Distemper, and knowing that in the latter the Dark always grows lighter, and does not continue so strong in length of Time as when it is first used, knew not that it has yet another Effect when it is mixed with Oyl, and instead of growing weaker, it grows stronger with Time, and even confounds the neighbouring Colours, and obscures them. For unctuous Liquors do not dry like Water, but spread and dilate themselves, carrying along with them the subtlest Parts of every Colour, and mixing them so with one another, that it is this which gives that Union and Sweetness to
Oyl-

Oyl-Pictures, that is not to be seen in those done in Water-Colours. But as Black is a strong Colour, and easily corrupts other Colours, it happens that Pictures done in Oyl grow black by length of Time, and when there is too much Oyl in the Colours ; and if they are not well used, they spoil and lose their Lustre, which does not so soon happen to those done in *Fresco*.

This then is the Reason why, in the Picture before us, the Shades appear a little too dark and too strong, and we no longer see the other Colours which *Raphael* used when he intended to join the Extremities of one Body to another, and to represent some small Communications of Tints and Lights.

The Academy said likewise, that *Titian* was not to be blamed for having made too much use of Reflexions ; and even shewed from the Pictures of his Master, that he had
used

used them no where but in places where they were absolutely necessary. But his great Art consisted in spreading over his Figures great Masses of Light and Shade, in order to give them greater Beauty and Grace, never minding if he departed from Nature, but only aiming to charm the Sight, and to represent Objects agreeably.

But *Raphael* had more noble Ideas, more exalted, and more agreeable to Reason: that in this Picture alone they might see all that is admirable, which the Art is capable of producing, and that a fine Genius can imagine the most sublime. To pass by the so easy Disposition of the Figures, so finely and so happily hit off, and on which Mr. *Mignard* had made Remarks, there was here so much Matter to enlarge upon the Grandeur and Diversity of Expressions, as might not only employ one Conference, but as much Time as they could bestow upon

upon the Consideration of that Work, because every Part of it rais'd Admiration, and was a fine Subject of Study to all Painters.

But as the Company could not stay for so long a Detail of all its Parts, they must only consider attentively this great Painter's artful Manner in the different Expressions; and how he has marked in the Faces of every one of his Figures the Affections correspondent to their Characters.

When one designs only to paint strong Passions, which agitate all the Parts of the Body in such a Manner, that there is not one of them which does not discover by its Motion the Condition it is in, whether strong Hatred, or furious Anger : it is no difficult Thing for a Painter to give his Figures an Expression very significant of what he would represent. But when it is necessary in a Picture to express weak Passions, or the Affections that lurk in the Bottom of the

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Heart,

Heart, then it is that an Artist has an Opportunity of shewing his utmost Capacity. For he must know the Nature of these Motions, how they are raised in the Soul, and what way they appear outwardly, that he may imprint on the Body of his Figures the Signs they are known by. But they must be the true and natural ones, which, without straining or doing violence to the Organs, does however put them in such a State, as easily discovers what passes in the Soul of the Person proposed.

Joy and Mirth are so common in the Faces of Children, that there are almost no Painters but can draw them in that Condition, and express in their Eyes and Mouth a Smile, which is a visible Effect of the internal Pleasure they feel when they see any thing they like, or when they get what they desire: but we may say, that the Joy which *Raphael* has painted on the Face of the Infant, has something singular; for we see it is not a childish Joy,
arising

arising from a sudden Pleasure at the Sight of his Mother, who is taking him out of his Cradle.

His Eyes, which are stedfastly fix'd upon her ; the gentle Smile appearing at the Extremities of his Mouth, but more in his lively and sparkling Eyes ; the little endearing Action of raising his Head and stretching out his Arms toward the Virgin, discover a prudent and tender Affection to his Mother, and shew, he would rather bestow Favours upon her, than be asking from her, as other Children commonly do.

By the Virgin's casting down her Eyes, and receiving her Son with a profound Respect, we see how much she reverences that dear Infant ; and by the Lowliness and Submission which appears in the humble Manner she is touching him, she shews the Duty of a Creature to its Creator.

As her Love for the Divine Infant is not a Passion like that which one has for ordinary Objects, which they love for themselves, or as

equal to themselves, and does not merely proceed from the natural Sentiments which Mothers have for their Children ; but this Passion is a Love wholly Divine, excited by her Knowledge of the incomprehensible Greatness of him whom she is holding : She is looking with a particular Regard on the holy Infant, whom she loves above all things ; and this Love is expressed by a true Devotion set forth by the Disposition of her Body, having one Knee upon the Ground ; by the respectful Manner in which she receives her Son, not embracing or caressing him freely, like other Parents, but holding him awfully in her Arms, with down-cast and half open Eyes, to shew her Reverence ; by the Vermillion Blush which covers her Face, to testify the Ardour of her Love, and the internal Joy of her Soul ; and finally by all the other Features and Parts of her Body, which are inactive, and only discover a sage Countenance, modest and shameful.

We

We likewise see, in the Countenance of St. *Elizabeth*, a great Humility and profound Respect: she is holding by St. *John*, and seems to teach him the Veneration he ought to have for the little *Jesus*.

This Divine Harbinger is joining his Hands, and, though but an Infant, he already discovers something serious and austere in him; for the Painter has given no Motion to his Mouth or Eyes, which may express any other Action besides that which the Soul gives the Senses when they are entirely employed in adoring God.

Saint *Joseph* is supported in a grave Manner; and tho' he is looking to the Virgin and her Son, his inward Thoughts are imployed as if he was meditating on the great Things which this Divine Infant was to accomplish, of whom he is the faithful Depository.

After that, the Academy shewed how *Raphael* had painted in the
Faces

Faces of the Angels a Joy and Beauty which seem supernatural, and that it appears chiefly in their Eyes, which are lively and sparkling, and discover the Joy of their Soul. For when we feel any Pleasure, the Heart dilates itself, and the hottest and purest Spirits rising to the Brain, and spreading over the Face, particularly the Eyes, rekindle the Blood and extend the Muscles, which makes the Countenance serene, gives it a finer Lustre, and adds a great deal of Splendor to all the other Parts of the Body.

In the end, the Company agreed that this Picture was a Master-piece of this great Painter, done by him for King *Francis I.* He thought it so worthy of that Monarch and of himself, that he has put his Name upon the Border of the Virgin's Robe in Capital Letters thus, RA-
PHAEL URBINAS PINGEBAT,
1518: That is, two Years before
his

his Death, when he was at his greatest Perfection.

After they had named Mr. *Nocret* to speak at the next Conference, he chose for his Subject a Picture of *Paulo Veronese* in the King's Cabinet.

Fifth CONFERENCE,

Held in the King's Cabinet of Paintings, Saturday October 1, 1667.

AFTER the Academy was assembled in the King's Cabinet, and every one had consider'd the Subject on which they were to make their Observations: Mr *Nocret*, who had been nam'd for that purpose, told the Company, that after the excellent Remarks which had been made in their former Conferences on the Pictures of *Raphael* and *Titian*, and on the ancient Statues; it appeared there was little Room for him to add much more on what regards
Paint-

Painting, if it were an Art which had Bounds, as most others have; but that it extends so far, and consists of so many fine Parts, that he had no reason to fear want of Subject to entertain the Company, but was rather afraid he should not be able to do it with all the Purity of Language the Subject he was going to speak of required, and with all the Ability necessary in an Assembly, where he intended, if possible, to satisfy the most Curious, and at the same Time instruct those that had need of it.

That he had made choice of a Picture of *Paulo Veronese's*, to shew them, that the Study of Painting is so vast, that there is none of the celebrated Painters who have not been more Masters of one Part of it than another, and to whom Nature has not given some particular Talent.

That *Paulo Veronese* might be considered as one of these illustrious Painters,

Painters, it being certain that every thing he has done takes it original Value from his natural Excellency ; of whom we may say, that Painting went in quest of him from his Cradle, since from his very Infancy he discovered an Inclination to it, and had constantly follow'd that Employment, notwithstanding the Desire of his Parents to engage him in another Profession. So that what is particularly remarkable in the Works of this great Man, is, that Ease in Painting so naturally and agreeably, as we see here ; for every thing seems to be made by themselves and without Art.

He said, he would neither stay to talk of his Birth, or of the Time in which he flourished, nor of the Works which he had done, as these Things did not belong to his Subject : That he would even say nothing of those Parts of Painting in which he had only equalled most other Painters, but would con-

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fine

fine himself to those in which he had excelled, and in which there are few who have arrived at so high a Degree of Perfection as he has done.

This Picture, which represents our Saviour in the Village of Emaus, sitting at Table in the midst of his twelve Disciples, to whom he manifested himself after his Resurrection, may be considered with respect to its *Ordonnance, Drawing, and Colouring*. As to the Manner in which the Subject ought to be handled to preserve Probability, the Painter has not apply'd himself to it, having been forced perhaps, by him who employed him, to represent that great Number of Figures which compose a whole Family, all whose Portraits he would have him draw, to which Number he has also added his own.

But if he has not preserved all the Probability necessary to his Subject, we must consider the Grandeur of the *Ordonnance* as an admirable Part of this Picture, and observe how all
the

the Figures are placed in so noble a Manner, that there is nothing in it which does not at once ravish the Sight and charm the Understanding. The Architecture in it is very well understood; but as he affected to neglect many parts which are not of the greatest Importance, by that means to make the principal ones appear with the greater Advantage, Mr. *Nocret* only endeavour'd to shew what was most considerable. He observed the Beauty of Design, and the Variety there was in the Airs of Heads; the Grace, Force, and Sweetness conform to the Age, Sexes and Conditions of the Persons represented.

As *Paulo Veronese* had a manner of Cloathing his Subjects, which was not commonly very agreeable to the Subjects he treated, and that in this he ought not to be imitated, he said he would not speak of that, but of his Expressions; the Lights and Colours

lours in this Picture being admirable, were what he intended to insist on.

He began with the Figure of Christ, where he shewed how the Painter had spread the Light upon the Face, and disposed it in so noble a Manner, and with such singular Beauty, that all the Features perfectly discovered the Image of a glorious Body.

The Disciple on the left Hand of his Divine Master appears quite astonished, which shews that *Paulo Veronese* intended to represent the Moment of time in which *Jesus Christ* made himself known by blessing the Bread; for the Disciple is so surpris'd, that he starts back and wonders at so marvellous an Event. This appears not only by the Disposition of his Body, but is likewise painted in his Face, by such Signs as commonly happen when any unforeseen Accident befalls us; his Eyes are stedfastly fixed on *Christ*, his Eye-brows elevated, and his Mouth half open.

Still

Still the more to preserve the Force of Light upon the Figure of our Saviour, this excellent Painter has been pleased to give that of the Disciple some Strokes of Light, which hit upon his Shoulder and Sleeve, and to give a glaring Light upon his Knee.

As the other Disciple is over against his Master, and a little farther advanced in the Picture, he is painted with great Force; and because he is near the Table, the Cloth of which occasions a great Whiteness, the Painter has given him a deeper and more lively Carnation, that he might bring him out a little from the White, and not have him too strongly enlightened, that thus the principal Figure might still predomine in that of *Christ*, he has only made one Ray of Light strike upon the Linen, which serves for his Sleeve.

Behind this Disciple there is a young Boy of very great Beauty ;
his

his Face is all enlightened, to shew both by the Quality and Quantity of Light, the distance between *Christ* and the Disciple. This Boy holds his Hand upon the Head of another younger one, whose Head is not enlightened but in the Front by one Ray of Light, the better to shew the Place he stands in, and where the Light passes.

There are two Men serving at the Table, one of whom has much the Resemblance of a Cook, and is dressed suitable to his Business; but what is remarkable, is, the Manner in which he is placed, so as to discover the Figure of the Disciple before him to the greater Advantage, whom the Painter has intended for one of the principal Personages.

Near the Cook there is another Man carrying a Plate, and seems to consider on what place of the Table he will put it. His Attitude and Looks evidently shew, that he attends

attends to what he is doing. Behind him, there is an old Woman, whose Face is painted with a half Teint.

On the other Side of the Table, and behind the Figure of Christ, there is a young Boy in a yellow Habit, but the Colour is faint, that it may serve for a Ground to Christ's Mantle, who on the enlightened Side receives the Shade of the opposite Disciple. This Part of the Picture is composed of the principal Persons in the Family, whom *Paulo Veronese* has designed to represent. And here one cannot help admiring his great Facility in disposing his Figures so well, and his fine Manner of putting them in easy and agreeable Actions. In the most advanced Part of the Picture, there is a young Woman with a Child in her Arms, and by her is another Child which endeavours to conceal itself under her Robe. The Painter has taken Care to give these
Fi-

Figures a finer and fresher Carnation than any of the rest, and only to shew a Mass of lively and agreeable Colours, which he has enlightened with a strong, well-diffused Light ; because this Groupe, being in a manner separate from his principal Subject, it takes nothing off from its Force, but makes as it were another Part, which gives Repose to the Sight, whilst it thus enjoys with Pleasure this fine Union of Colours, which Mr. *Nocret* made them observe in the Draperies, so perfectly agreeing with the Carnations, and blending so tenderly with one another : not falling suddenly into one extreme Colour from another, but always making use of the neighbouring Colours to degrade the stronger ones.

He likewise desir'd they would take notice of a Boy, who stands before this Woman, holding a little Dog in his Arms ; he is cloathed with a very dark Stuff, in order to make a
Contrast

Contrast with the other Colours behind, and the better to bring out the Head of the Child, where Mr. *Nocret* observed a fine Kind of Painting, and such sweet and natural Tints, that hardly any thing could be more perfect.

To give more *Relief* to this Groupe, and to oppose something to the Beauty of this Woman, and the Bloom of her Children, the Painter has set behind, a Man cloathed in black with a *Moor* at his side, which serves to give Depth to the whole Picture. These two Figures, stronger of Colour, and not so much enlightened as the rest, make an admirable Contrast with the Brightness of the shining Carnations ; and the lively Lights which are spread on the Figures that have been mentioned, hinder the Brightness of the Carnations and Lights from being confounded with certain Strokes of Light, which glance upon the Vessels of

L Gold

Gold and Silver that are ranked on a Side-Board between two Pillars.

Behind this Woman there is a Man, who probably represents *Paulo Veronese* himself : His Head is painted with great Force and sufficient Light. But at her Side, a small Distance from her, are her two Daughters, the Youngest of which is only enlightened by Reflexion, which proceeds from the Disciple's red Habit, who is before her ; having no direct Light but on the lower Part of her Gown, which is designed to mark the true Place she stands in.

Behind this Girl there is another a little bigger, who raises her Head in a most agreeable Manner. She is in a half Light, and serves to detach the Figures which are about her from one another, that the Eye may not be confused, but have every thing to please and charm it.

Among

Among the foremost Figures are two little Girls, diverting themselves with a large Dog, in a manner very suitable to Children ; they are cloathed in a white Stuff with Flowers of Gold, which, together with the Light that the Painter has shed upon them, renders them most agreeable, and brings them very near the View.

Mr. *Nocret* having observed, that the Figures are perfectly disposed in this fine Composition, and that the Lights and Shades are given with a Force and Diminution agreeable to the fine *Ordonnance*, added, that we ought particularly to consider the easy and masterly Hand which appeared in this Work, where there was no Constraint, no Embarrassment in the Disposition and Arrangement of the Figures; but every thing from both in the proper Attitudes and Situation.

The Tints of the Colours are so natural and charming, that all

here seems alive; not only by the Expressions of the Motions, which are the chief Signs of Life, but also by the Colour of the Flesh, which appears so true, that one would believe he sees the Skin covering the Blood, Muscles and Bones, as in natural Bodies.

He observed, that *Paulo Veronese* having represented these Figures under a Lodge, or Gallery open on all Sides, those on the left, by which the greatest Light comes, have more of it than the rest, as might easily be seen in the Portrait of *Paulo* himself, and in that of the Woman holding the Child; for on the other Side, where the Men are serving at Table, the Light is much weaker. One of the Company replied, that we ought also to consider in this Picture, that the Painter had not taken so much care of the Light, with regard to the particular Effect it commonly has upon Bodies, nor to the Shades which the Figures
cast

cast upon one another, as he was exact to spread great Masses of Light and Shade upon them in Places where they might have a much finer Effect; neither had he examined how much Light or Shade every Part was capable of receiving; but considered all his Picture at once, and according to the Disposition of the great Parts, he had filled it with the greatest Lights, and by this it was that he found out the Secret of charming the Sight. This Part was so much study'd by all the Painters of *Lombardy*, that in order to be more perfect in it, they had neglected others: whereas the Schools of *Rome* have scrupled to take these Liberties, sticking as close as they could to the most beautiful Nature.

One may indeed receive much Instruction from both in choosing an advantageous Disposition, and the Lights which may produce these good Effects, and even in some cases assist Nature and adorn her, if we
may

may so speak ; when nothing is done chiefly whereby we may quite contradict or disguise her.

As to the Colours of this Picture, they are fine, fresh, and laid on with great Facility and an easy Hand ; but there is not however that sweet Harmony and fine Union in their Arrangement, which is so eminent in the Works of *Titian*.

Another Gentleman thought fit to object against the Face of *Christ*, to shew that it appeared swelled, and that the Cheeks were too round ; but this is rather owing to the Disposition, and the Light in which it stands, that makes it appear with so great an Uniformity of Tints, which were even necessary to set off that glorious Body in a proper Light : this does not permit all the Parts of the Face to be seen so distinctly, as every one owned to be true. Thus there can nothing be found in this Picture, but what is very Admirable and Divine.

There

There are even some who excuse the *Ordonnance* of it, and say, that this so numerous Family may have Respect to one like it which met in the Place where the Disciples were to dine, who perhaps spying something singular in the Person of *Christ* when he came in with his two Disciples, stayed there to consider him. But the Academy did not regard this charitable Construction, and would allow nothing more to be said on the Decorum necessary to the Perfection of this Work, contenting themselves with recommending only the Parts worthy of Imitation, such as Mr. *Nocret* had observed.

And because Lights of Reflexion had been spoken of in one of the former Conferences, and it had been said they were not agreeable or even natural in the Shut-up Places, there was however in this Picture a Girl enlightened by Reflexion, which had a very fine Effect; the Academy shewed, that all these Figures were
not

not in a Place like a Chamber, which receives Light only from one Opening, but in one that is lighted quite round, and which particularly draws a very strong and comprehensive Light on the Left-side.

But besides this they shewed, that this Figure was not enlightened with an original Light, but a reflected one, and that thus it had one Part enlightened on the side of the reflected Light, and the other shaded; which does not occasion such an Inconveniency as those which are enlightened on one Side by an original Light, and on the other by one reflected: That it is of that Kind which may be made use of to great Advantage, and may produce fine Effects in a Picture, by means of these different Lights skilfully distributed.

The Conference being ended, the Company begged Mr. *Le Brun* to make choice of a Picture for the first *Saturday* of next Month.

Sixth

Sixth CONFERENCE,

*Held in the Royal Accademy, on
Saturday Nov. 5. 1667.*

MR. *Le Brun* began by telling the Company, that if the Works of the greatest Painters who had lived in the two last Ages had furnished Matter for their past Conferences, it was but just that the Works of a Painter in our own Day should make up the present Entertainment.

That the first time he had spoken in the Academy, he took for the Subject of his Discourse a Picture of *Raphael*, the Merit of which had made it the Admiration of his Age, and an Honour to his Country.

But now he was to discourse of a Picture done by Mr. *Poussin*, who is the Glory of this Age, and an Honour to *France*.

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The Divine *Raphael* was he on whose Works he had endeavoured to form his Studies ; and that the illustrious Mr. *Poussin* had assisted him by his Counsels and directed him in this great Enterprize ; so that he must own these two great Men as his Masters, and make this public Acknowledgment thereof.

When they were examining the Pictures of *Raphael*, and the Painters of his Age, every one indulged their Conjectures, and deferr'd giving their Opinion ; because the Colours having lost their original Strength or true Tints, we cannot fully perceive what those great Men have represented, nor are we able to judge of all the Beauties of their Works. But as he had the advantage to converse often with the great Man of whom he was going to speak, and since his Pictures still retain'd the same Lustre and Vivacity of Colours as when he gave them the last Touches, one might tell his Sentiments of them with more Knowledge

Knowledge and Certainty than of the others.

And if all the particular Talents in every *Italian* Painter had been taken Notice of, all these Talents met together in our *French* Painter alone. If there is any one which he has not possessed to the greatest Perfection, he has been Master of them all in their more useful and principal Parts.

Raphael has furnished Matter of Discourse on the Grandeur of his *Contours*, and of his correct Manner of designing them, on the natural Expression of the Passions, and the noble Manner of cloathing his Figures.

In *Titian* we observe a thorough Intelligence of Colours, and the true Means to find out Union and Melody.

Paulo Veronese had furnished us with Means of Entertainment on his Facility of Handling, and on the

Grandeur of his *Ordonnance* and Composition.

But in this Work of the famous Mr. *Poussin* all these Qualifications unite, with several others not observed in the Painters hitherto mention'd.

For that reason, he said, he would divide his Discourse into four Parts. In the first he would speak of Disposition in general, and of every Figure in particular. Secondly of Design, and the Proportions of Figures. Thirdly of the Expression of the Passions. And lastly material and aerial Perspective, and of the Harmony of Colours.

Disposition in general contains three things, which are very general in themselves, *viz.* the Choice of the Scene, the Disposition of the Figures, and the Colour of the Air.

The Composition of Figures which comprehend the Subject, ought to be composed of Parts, Groupes, and Contrasts. The Parts divide the Sight, the Groupes determine

mine and connect the Subject, and Contrast gives Motion to it.

But before we proceed further to tell what Mr. *Le Brun* observed in this Picture of Mr. *Poussin*, it will be necessary to give an Idea of that excellent Work, and to shew as it were such a Copy, tho' an imperfect one, as may be of use to make us understand what follows.

The Picture represents the Children of *Israel* in the Wilderness, when God sent them Manna.

It is six Feet high, and above four Feet broad. The Landskip is composed of Mountains, Woods and Rocks, which perfectly represent a desert Place. Towards the Fore-part, on one Side, there is a Woman giving the Breast to another old Woman, who seems to fondle a young Child which is hard by her. Near them, there is a Man standing covered with red Drapery; and a little behind him, another sick Man sitting upon the Ground, half resting,

resting, and supporting himself upon a Staff. The Woman who gives Suck is cloathed in a blue Robe, with a purple Mantle turned up with yellow, and her Head dress'd of the same Colour.

There is another old Man near these Women, whose Back is naked, and the rest of his Body covered with a Shirt and Mantle mixed with red and yellow. A young Man is holding him by the Arm, and helping to raise him up.

In the same Line, and on the other Side toward the Left of the Picture, there appears a Woman turning her Back and holding a Child in her Arms. She has one Knee on the Ground, her Robe is yellow, and her Mantle blue : She is beck'ning to a young Man, who has a Basket full of Manna in his Hand, to carry some of it to the old Man just mentioned.

Near this Woman are two Boys, the eldest of which is pushing away

away the youngest, that he may gather the Manna himself, which is scattered on the Ground. And a little before them, we see four Figures ; the two nearest represent a Man and a Woman gathering Manna ; and of the two others, one is putting it to his Mouth, and the other is his Son, cloathed in a Robe mixed of a blue Colour and a little yellow ; it is tucked up before, to receive the Manna as it falls from Heaven.

Near the Boy, who is carrying the Basket, there is a Man on his Knees, with his Hands lifted up to Heaven. On the right and left Hand of the Picture there are two Groupes of Figures, which have the Middle open and free to the Sight, the better to shew *Moses* and *Aaron* : The first of whom has a Robe of blue Stuff with a red Mantle ; the last is wholly cloathed in white. They are accompany'd by the Elders
of

of the People, who are disposed in several different Attitudes.

On the Mountains and Hills which are at a Distance there are Tents, and Fires lighted, a vast Number of People are scatter'd round about, very like an Encampment.

The Heavens in some Places are overspread with thick Clouds, and the Light which strikes upon the Mountains appears like that of the Morning, which is not very clear, because the Air is filled with Vapours ; and on one Side it is still more obscured by the Descent of the Manna.

Mr. *Le Brun* observed, that in this Picture we ought to consider the Disposition of the Scene, and to Mind how properly it represented a frightful Desert and an uncultivated Land.

The Painter being to represent the *Jews* in a Country unprovided of every thing and in extreme Necessity, his Work must carry some Marks to express his Thoughts, and which
may

may agree with his Subject. For this Reason, the Figures are in a languishing Condition, to express the Weariness and Hunger with which they were distressed. Even the Light of the Air appears pale and weak, which imprints a kind of Sadness on the Figures. And altho' the Landkip be disposed in a very elegant Manner, and fill'd with admirable Figures, the Sight cannot find that Pleasure it desires, and which it commonly feels in other Pictures, designed only to represent a fine Country.

There is nothing but great Rocks, which serve as a Ground to the Figures. The Trees have only dry Leaves without any Sap; the Earth neither bears Plants nor Herbs; and there are neither Roads nor By-ways in the Country, to make us believe it has never been inhabited.

What he called *Parts*, he said, are all the Figures separated into different Places of the Picture, which

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divide

divide the View, and give Occasion in some measure to lead it round these Figures, to consider the different Plans and Situations of all the Bodies, and the Bodies themselves differing from one another.

The *Groupe*s are formed of the Assemblages of many Figures joined together, which do not divide the principal Subject, but on the contrary serve to unite and fix the Sight, that it may not always be wandering in so great an Extent of Country. For that Reason, when the *Groupe* is composed of more than two Figures, we must observe which of them appears most as the principal Part of the *Groupe*; and as for the others which are along with it, we may say that some of them are as it were in the *Place*, and the rest as Supporters.

Here we may observe that judicious *Contrast* which serves to give Motion, and which proceeds from the different Dispositions of the Figures

gures that compose it; the Situation, Aspect, and Motions of which being according to History, produce that Unity of Action and fine Harmony that are so remarkable in this Picture.

We must observe the Woman, who suckles her Mother, as the principal Figure in this Groupe, and the Mother and Child as the Chain and Link. The old Man who beholds this Action, and the young Man who takes him by the Arm, serve to support the Groupe on each side, giving it a great space in the Picture, and setting the other Figures which are behind at a Distance.

There are none but the Woman who is giving Suck, with the Mother and her Child, which enter into the composition of this Groupe; and, if they had not these Figures to support them, opposed to *Moses* and the other Figures which are at a greater distance, it is evident that this Groupe

would be dry and poor, and that all the Work would appear composed of too many small Parts.

It is the same of the Woman who is turning her Back ; she is supported one on Side by a young Man who holds the Basket, and by him who is on his Knees ; and on the other Side by these two Figures which are gathering Manna, and by the Man who is tasting it, and by the young Girl who holds out her Robe.

As to the Light, he observ'd it was shed confusedly over all the Objects. And to shew that this Action happened in the Morning, there are some remains of Vapour at the foot of the Mountains, and on the Surface of the Earth, which render it a little obscure, and make the distant Objects less perceptible. This serves to set off the Figures which are before to the greater Advantage. There are certain Gleams of Light striking on them from the openings of the Clouds, which the Painter has done

done on purpose, that the particular Lights which he distributes in different Parts of his Work may be more natural.

He has even affected to keep the Air darker and thicker on the Side where the Manna falls ; the Figures are more enlighten'd there, than on the other Side where the Air is more serene. This he has done to vary all his Figures, and to give a more agreeable Diversity of Lights and Shades to his Picture.

After having made these Remarks on the *Disposition* of the whole Work, he next examined what regards the *Design*. And shewed, that Mr. *Poussin* had been intelligent and exact in that Part ; that the *Contours* of the old Man, who is standing, are great and well designed ; that all the Extremities of the Parts are correct, and pronounced with a Precision which leaves nothing further to be desired.

But

But what he took most Notice of in the Picture, and is indeed well worthy observation, is the admirable Proportion of Figures throughout, which Mr. *Poussin* has taken from the best Antiques, and perfectly suited them to his own Subject.

He observed, that the Figure of the old Man, who is standing, has the same Proportions as *Lacoon*, which consists in a well-made Shape, and a Composition of Members suitable to a Man who is neither very robust, nor too delicate. By the same Proportion he has formed the Body of the sick Man; for tho' he be meagre and extenuated, we may yet observe throughout all his Members a just Proportion, capable of making up a fine Body.

As to the Woman who is suckling her Mother, she resembles the Figure of *Niobe*; all the Parts are designed with much Symmetry and Correctness; and here, as in the Statue of that Queen, there is
a masculine

a masculine Beauty and Delicacy throughout, which shews her high Birth, and agrees perfectly with a middle-aged Woman.

The Mother is done by the same Proportion; but as she is older, she has more Meagerness and Dryness: for as the natural Heat begins to dry up in old People, their Nerves and Muscles are no longer supported with so much Vigour as formerly, and thus they appear more relaxed, and even occasion certain Appearances upon the Skin, which a Painter ought not to omit, if he would imitate Nature well.

The old Man, who is lying behind these two Women, has his Resemblance from a Statue of *Seneca* at *Rome*, in the Garden of *Borghese*. For as Mr. *Poussin* had his Imagination stock'd with an infinite Number of fine Ideas, which he had acquired by long Study, he chose the Image of this Philosopher, as the most agreeable to represent exactly

exactly a venerable old Man, who seemed also to be a Man of Parts. Here there is a fine Proportion of Members, an Appearance of Nerves and Dryness in the Flesh peculiar to old Age, and to one who has borne much Fatigue.

As for the young Man who is speaking to him, his Proportions are much the same as those of *Antinous* at *Belvedere*, and discover in the *Contours* of the Members a solid Flesh to shew the Force and Vigour of his Youth.

The young Boys, who are fighting, have two different Proportions; the youngest seems to have for his Model, *Lacoon's* youngest Son; and the better to express his tender Age, the Painter has formed all the Parts of his Body delicate, and not fully shaped. But the other, who seems to be older and more vigorous, has in the Compositions of his Members a Resemblance of one of the Wrestlers in the Palace of *Medicis*.

The

The young Woman, who is turning her Back, has the same Resemblance to the *Diana of Ephesus* in the *Louvre*; for though this young Woman has more Cloaths on her, the Beauty and Elegance of her Members may be perceived through the Draperies; the fine and delicate *Contours* of which form that easy and agreeable Stature which the *Italians* call *Svelta*.

In this last Groupe the Painter has intended an Opposition of Proportions with the other first mentioned, so that there might be a Contrast between them, and that they might appear of different Ages, by the Delicateness of all their Figures, as well as by their Actions. In the young Man who carries the Basket, there is a Delicacy of Beauty which could have no other Model than the antique *Apollo*, the Outlines of the Members having something more charming than those of the Boy

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speaking to the old Man, who is not so well born.

The Girl, who holds her by the Robe, has the Air and Proportion of the *Venus of Medicis*, and the Man on his Knees seems to have been copied from *Hercules Commodus*.

After M. *le Brun* had observed these admirable Proportions, and shewed that the Painter had followed them so well that they did not look like a Copy, and yet not entirely like the Originals, he proceeded to the third Part of his Discourse, and spake next of *Expression*.

First, he shewed that Mr. *Poussin* had made his Figures so proper to his Subject, that all their Actions had respect to the State of the *Jews*, who were reduced to extreme Necessity, and dreadful Weakness in the midst of a Desert, but in a Moment were supplied by Assistance from Heaven; so that some of them suffer without knowing of the Assistance sent them, while others, who
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were the first that felt the Effects of it, are employed in different Actions.

But in order to enter more particularly into these Figures, and to understand their Actions, not only those they are doing, but also their very Thoughts, he said, he would make an exact Detail of all their Motions.

It was not without design, that Mr. *Poussin* had represented an aged Man beholding the Woman who was suckling her Mother; because so extraordinary an Act of Charity ought to be considered by a grave Person, the more to heighten it, and be the Subject of Admiration to those who look on the Picture. He has not intended him for a clownish rustic Man, because that Sort of People never reflect on things worthy of Consideration.

As this great Painter has not disposed his Figures merely to fill up Room in his Picture, but also to

make them all appear as if they moved of themselves, either by the Action of the Body, or the Motion of the Soul ; he observed, that his Man looks like one astonish'd or surpriz'd with Admiration. His Arms are drawn back, and laid across his Body; because, on a great Surprise, all the Members commonly shrink one after another ; but chiefly when the Object which surprizes, only imprints Admiration at what passes, and does not occasion Fear or Terror to trouble our Senses, and make us seek assistance to save our selves from the impending Evil. Thus as he is only wondering at a thing so worthy Admiration, he opens his Eyes as wide as he can ; and, as if he comprehended the Greatness of the Action by looking more attentively, he employs all the Powers of the Body to assist the Sight in wondering at this Object, which he cannot cease to admire.

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It is not so in the other Parts of his Body; his Spirits, which retire from these other Parts, make them appear motionless; his Mouth is shut, as if he was afraid his Thoughts should escape him, and likewise because he cannot find Words to express the Beauty of the Action. And as at that instant the Passage of Respiration is shut, it occasions the Parts of the Stomach to rise more than ordinary, as appears by some Muscles which are here seen.

This Man even seems to retire a little behind, to shew the Surprize which this Accident raises in his Mind, and at the same time to discover the Respect he had for the Woman's Virtue who is giving the Breast.

He shew'd how even the Woman does not look to her Mother while she is giving her this charitable Relief, but leans toward her Child. The Desire she has to succour them both, makes her do the Action of a
double

double Parent. On one side, she sees her to whom she owed her Birth, in extreme Weakness ; and on the other the Fruit of her own Body demanding the Food which belonged to it, and which she was bereaving it of, to give away to another. Filial and maternal Affection equally acted upon her. The Moment she takes the Breast from her Child, it falls a crying, while she, by her Words and Caresses, endeavours to please it. As it is afraid for them both, and is not moved with Jealousy, as it would be if an Infant like itself was prefer'd, it is satisfi'd to shew it's Grief by complaining, and does not fall into an Excess of Passion for that which is taken from it.

The old Woman, who is embracing her Daughter and laying her Hand on her Shoulder, is very like the Actions of old People, who squeeze whatever they hold, for fear they should lose it, and which likewise

wife shews the Love and Gratitude of the Mother to the Daughter.

The sick Man, who raises himself half up in order to see them, makes them more remarkable; he is so much surprized, that he forgets his Illness, in order to see what passes: for as the natural Heat of his Body rises, and his Spirits ascend, all the Strength he has is in the upper Parts of his Body, in order to behold the Love of the Daughter.

In the old Man, who is lying behind these two Women, and who looks up and extends his Arms; and in the young Man, who shews the Place where the Manna is falling, the Painter has intended to express two very different Motions of the Soul: the young Man is filled with Joy on seeing the Food falling, and shews it immediately to the old Man without ever minding from whence it comes: but he, more sage and judicious, instead of looking to the Manna, lifts up his Eyes to Heaven,
and

and adores the Providence of God who has filled the Earth with it.

As the Author of this Picture is admirable in expressing the Diversity of Motions, and knew what way to give Life to his Figures, he has made all their different Actions and Expressions proceed from particular Causes, which have respect to his principal Subject. This was well observed by Mr. *Le Brun* in the two Boys fighting for the Manna; for by this is signified the extreme Necessity to which the People were reduced; and because it was universally felt, the Painter has made the two Boys fight together, not as if they intended to hurt one another, but only that one may hinder the other from getting that which they both saw was so necessary to them.

It is an Effect of great Goodness in the Woman cloathed in Yellow, as she desires the young Man, who has the Basket full of Manna, to carry it to the old Man who is behind her, thinking he had need of it. But

By the young Woman who is looking up he has expressed the Delicacy and disdainfull Temper of the Sex, who believe every thing ought to happen according to their Wish, for that Reason she is not at the Pains to stoop down to gather Manna, but catches it as it falls from Heaven, as if it was sent for her alone.

In order to vary all the Actions of his Figures, he has represented a Man tasting the Manna : we know by his Mien that he is but just beginning to eat it, and wants to know what Taste it has.

The Man and Woman who are gathering it, are Painted in the same Attitude, because both have the same Design, and by their Haste in gathering this heavenly Dew, one would think, there are some of them who by a needless fore fight want to lay up a large Provision.

One of the finest Pieces in this Picture, as Mr. *Le Brun* observed,

is the Groupe of Figures before *Moses* and *Aaron*, some of whom are kneeling, and others in a Posture of Humility, holding Vessels full of Manna, and seem to thank the Prophet, because they had received it. He shews that *Moses*, by lifting up his Eyes and Hands tells them it is from Heaven they have received this Assistance; And *Aaron* who is doing the Office of High-Priest, in joining his Hands, teaches them by his Example to be thankful to God.

We may observe, that the other Figures behind *Moses* are looking up to Heaven and thanking God for the Blessings he is showering down upon them: These are the most ancient Sages of the *Israelites* who have a particular Knowledge of the Miracles God has done for them by the Intercession of his Prophet.

Among the Figures which are near *Moses* and are listening to him, there is a Woman, by her Action discovers her Curiosity; for as she is going
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to say it is from Heaven the Food is sent to her, she looks up, and that she may defend herself the better from the excessive Light which dazzles her, she interposes her Hand between her and it, as if she would penetrate into the Source of these Blessings.

Besides all these fine Expressions, we may consider further how Mr. *Poussin* has clothed his Figures; and here it is we may say he has always excelled. The Habits he gives them are real ones, and which cover them entirely; not as other Painters do, who throw them at random, and do not cover the Body but with Labels, with the form of a Garment. In the Pictures of this great Master it is not so; as every Figure has a Body under its Habit, so every Habit is proper to the Body, and covers it well. But there is yet this more, he has not only made the Habits to conceal the Naked, and has not taken all the Fashions of every

Country ; but has been very careful of the *Decorum*, and known well how to manage that Part of the *Costume*, no less necessary in Historical Pictures than in Poetry. For that Reason he has not failed in it, but made use of cloathing as the Custom of the Country, or the Quality of the Persons represented required at his Hands.

Thus he observed, that as among the *Jews* there were People of all Ranks, and some more fatigu'd than others, the Figures are not all regularly cloathed in one manner. Some of them are half naked, as the old Man, who is looking to the Daughter nursing the Mother. And tho' the Folds of the old Man's Cloak be large and free, and made of coarse Stuff, they do not hinder the Nakedness of the Figure from being seen. The kind of Breeches which the Ancients called *Bracca*, that cover his Ancles and Legs, is not of the same Stuff with the Cloak;

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it has smaller and cloſer Folds; and yet the Legs do not appear too cloſe, all the Beauty of their *Contours* may be ſeen.

The Rank of every Figure is particularly diſtinguiſhed by the Beauty of the Draperies, ſome of which are enriched with Embroideries, and others, larger and more grand, give an Air of Maſteſty to thoſe that wear them.

As to what regards *lineal Perſpective* in this Picture, Mr. *le Brun* ſhewed, that it is obſerved to great Perfection. And that Mr. *Pouſſin* being to repreſent a mountainous Country, the Situation of which is very unequal, he has made uſe of high Terraces to place his Figures upon, which gives the greater *Play* and Variety to all the Diſpoſitions of the Figures that compoſe this Work : and it is even this which ſerves to diſcover ſuch a great Multitude in ſo ſmall a Space, and which places the Figures of *Moſes* and *Aaron* to the
greater

greater Advantage, who are as it were the Heroes of the Subject.

As to the *Effusion of Light* ; having represented a thick Air, and loaded with Morning Vapours, he has hastened more the Diminutions of his distant Figures, and degraded them as much by the Quality, as by the Force of the Colours, to advance these the more, and to make them shine with the greater Vivacity, by the Light which they receive with the greater Force by the opening of a Cloud that is supposed to be above, which he likewise makes natural by other Clouds appearing half open in the Picture.

In the *Effects of Light* there are three Things worthy of Observation. The first is the principal Light, which shines most. The second is, a Light glancing on Objects. The third is, a faint Light, which is lost and as it were confounded by the Thickness of the Air.

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It is this principal Light which strikes upon the Man's Shoulder who is standing surprized ; upon the Woman's Head who is giving Suck ; on her Mother who is sucking ; and upon the Woman's Back clad in Yellow, who is turning about.

'Tis only the upper Part of these Pictures that are illuminated with this strong Light ; for the inferiour Parts have only a faint glancing Light ; as that of the sick Man, those of the old Man lying, and the young Man helping him up, and even those of the two Boys fighting, and all the rest about the Woman who is turning her Back ; the Light of which is degraded by the Thickness of the Air in proportion to their Distances.

As to *Moses* and those who are about him, they are only enlightened by a Light which is weakened by the Air intervening in the Distance between the others and those which are in the fore Ground of the Picture, and which have yet less Light, as every Figure is
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is at a greater Distance, according to its Situation and the Colour of the Draperies ; some being more proper than others to be made appear with a stronger Light than they have.

Yellow and Blue being the two Colours which partake most of the Light and Air, Mr. *Poussin* has cloathed all his Figures with Stuffs of these Colours ; and in all the other Draperies he has constantly made use of these two principal Colours, making the Yellow in a manner prevail more than any other, because the Light which is shed on the Picture is very Yellowish.

After Mr. *Le Brun* had ended making all these Remarks, every one thought them not only very learned and judicious, but also very useful for understanding that Work, and very necessary for those that would perfect themselves in Painting.

A certain Gentleman said, there was indeed many things in this Picture worthy of Admiration, and which serv'd to recommend it, that he would not do it so much Injury, as to seek an Occasion of finding fault with it: he would likewise have them believe it was not to diminish the Esteem of it, if he ventur'd to say, that tho' Mr. *Poussin* had been so exact as to omit none of the necessary Circumstances in the Composition of a History, he had not for all that made so just a Representation of what pass'd in the Desert, when God caused the Manna to descend on the *Israelites*; since he has represented it as if it had happened by Day, and in the Sight of the People, which contradicts the Text in *Exodus*, that says, they found it fallen in the Morning round about their Camp like Dew, which they went to gather. Further; he found that the great Necessity and extreme Misery, which is expressed

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by the Woman who is forced to suck her own Daughter, does not agree with the Point of Action which he painted ; since when the Manna fell in the Desert, the People had been already relieved by the Quails, which had been sufficient to quench the greatest Famine, and deliver them from so pressing a Necessity, as that the Painter has represented.

That to make a true Representation of the gathering the Manna, it was not necessary to paint the People so astonished ; and still less so to make that miraculous Meat fall like Snow, since they found it on the Ground every Morning like Dew.

To this Mr. *Le Brun* replied : It is not the same Painting as in History. An Historian can express himself by an Arrangement of Words, and a continued Thread of Discourse, which form an Image of what he would say, and represent successively any Action he pleases:
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But a Painter having only a Moment to take any Image he is going to represent, to shew what passed in that Moment, it is sometimes necessary to join many Accidents together which preceded, in order to make the Subject he is explaining be comprehended; without which they who see his Work will be no better instructed, than if this Historian, instead of repeating the Subject of his History, had contented himself only to relate the Event.

It is for this Reason that Mr. *Poussin*, intending to shew how the Manna was sent to the *Israelites*, did not believe it would be sufficient to represent it fallen on the Ground, where the Men and Women are gathering it, but likewise, to display the Greatness of the Miracle, that he must shew at the same Time the State of the *Jewish* People when that happened. That it was not enough to represent them in a desert Place, some of them

pining away, while others are busy gathering Manna, and some are thanking God for his Benefits; these several States and different Actions serving him instead of Words in Discourse, to express his Thoughts: and since Painting has no other Language but these kinds of Expressions, it is this which obliges him to represent the Manna falling from Heaven, because he had no other way left to shew from whence it came. For if one do not see it falling down, but the Men and Women gathering it from the Ground only, he may be ready to take it for some Grain, or Fruit; and so this Circumstance, by which he points out to us, that it is a Food sent from Heaven, would not have place in his Work.

It is true, the People had already received a Nourishment of Quails which fell in the Camp; but as that did not happen but one Night, we may say they had not so quickly

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ly restored the most Famished. And thus it is not without probability that the old Woman, who is suck-
ing, had need of that charitable Relief. For tho' God by his Prophet had promised the Day before to give them Food that Night, and Bread every Morning, yet still, as the People were very numerous, and scatter'd over a great Extent of Country, it is not unlikely that there were several who did not know that the Promise was made them; or even though they knew it, and had already felt the Effects of it the Night before, some of them might not believe *Moses's* Promise, as they were naturally very incredulous.

Another Gentleman added to what Mr. *Le Brun* had said, that if by the Rules for dramattick Pieces, Poets are allowed to join several Actions together, tho' they happen'd at different Times, in order to make one single Action, provided there be nothing contradicting one another
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in them, and that Probability was exactly observed; it is much more just Painters should take that Liberty, since without it their Works would be deprived of what renders a Composition most admirable, and helps to discover the Beauty and Genius of their Author. In this Accident, we cannot accuse Mr. *Poussin* of having put any thing in his Picture which hinder'd the Unity of Action, or was not probable; or of any thing which did not concur to represent one single Subject. Though he had not exactly followed the Text of the Scripture, we must not for all that say he has departed much from historical Truth. For if he intended to follow that of *Josephus*, he says, that after the *Jews* had received the Quails, *Moses* prayed to God to send them yet other Food, and as he was lifting up his Hands, there fell from Heaven Drops like Dew, which enlarged on looking to them, and that
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the People thought it was Snow, but having all tasted them, they knew it was Food sent from Heaven; so that in the Morning they went into the Fields to take their Provision for that Day only.

As for his representing some Persons in Misery, while others receive Support; in this the Painter has shewn, that he is a true Poet, having composed his Work by Rules which the Art of Poetry lays down for dramatic Pieces: for to represent perfectly the History which he treats, he had need of the Parts necessary for a Poem, in order to bring Misfortunes to Happiness.

For this Reason, the Groupes of Figures, which make different Actions, are like so many Episodes, that serve instead of what they call *Peripeties*, and by this Means set forth the Change which happened to the *Israelites*, when they were delivered from extreme Misery and entered upon a more happy State. Thus
their

their Misfortune is represented by these languishing and faint Persons; the Change which happen'd is figured to us by the Descent of the Manna; and their Happiness is set forth by their possessing a Food, which they are gathering with extreme Joy. So very far shall we be from finding Reason to blame what Mr. *Poussin* has painted in this Picture, that we ought rather to admire the Manner of his Conduct, in representing a Subject so great and so difficult, where he has done nothing but what is authorized by good Examples, and worthy the Imitation of all succeeding Painters.

All the Academy was of the same Opinion. They desir'd Mr. *Bourdon* to make choice of a Subject for their next Meeting.

Seventh

Seventh CONFERENCE,

*Held in the Academy, on Saturday
December 3, 1667.*

THE Picture which was at that Time brought into the Academy, to be examined by Mr. *Bourdon*, was also one of Mr. *Poussin's*, and of equal Grandeur with that of the Manna, which had been examined in the last Assembly, but it was different from it in its *Ordonnance* and in the Subject of which it treats. That of the Manna, represents a barren and desert Place; a dusky and melancholy Light, Persons sad and languishing, and the true Picture of an uncultivated Land, where the Children of *Israel* are in extreme Misery. Quite otherwise here, the Light is clear and serene, the Country diversified with agreeable Objects, and the Figures appear with Joy in their Countenances. As the

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Sun is not far above the Horizon, the Rocks and Buildings cast long Shadows, the Trees and Feet of the Mountains appear loaded with that fresh Vapour which rises in the Morning like a light Smoak.

In one Side of the Picture there appears a Mountain, whose Top is rugged, but very agreeable, by reason of the magnificent Buildings and verdant Trees, with which it is adorned.

On the Declivity of the Mountain, and on several Eminencies which grow lower as they approach, are several Palaces and Houses, whose Structure is as rich, as their Situation is agreeable, being adorned with Terrasses and Gardens, which make them still pleasanter to behold. These Buildings are surrounded with a Current of Water, which washes the Roots of some of the Trees, and seems to spring from the Sides of the Mountains.

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In the fore Ground of the Picture are several Figures, the Chief of which represents *Jesus Christ* with two blind Men kneeling before him. The nearest of them is clad in Blue, and the other in a Garment of bright Purple ; this last is led by a Man cloathed in Yellow, and between the Figure of *Christ* and the first blind Man, there is an old Man clad in a greenish Robe, with a dark Grey Mantle very long, who stoops, and is looking attentively at the blind Man, whom *Christ* is touching.

At his Side, there is another Man very like a Pharisee, with a long Beard and a fine purple Robe, and a Cap of the Shape of a Turban. By him, there is a Man cloathed in Blue, with a yellow Mantle, looking over the lame Man who is stooping. The Robe which our Saviour wears is of a yellowish White, and his Mantle of a Purple Colour. He is attended by three of his Disciples; the nearest of them, whose Back is

turned to us, is dressed in a Yellow Mantle, which only is observable on his right Shoulder; the Colour of his Robe is dark Grey; the two others are clad in Red, and the last is dress'd in Blue.

At a competent Distance from them, and towards the Country, there is a Man sitting, who has the Appearance of a poor Beggar; and on the other side, which resembles the Entry into a City, there is a Woman cloathed in Green with a Child in her Arms, which she is turning about to see what passes.

When Mr. *Bourdon* saw that the Company was attentive to the Remarks he was going to make on this Work, he began his Discourse with an Encomium on Mr. *Poussin* and his Pictures, and after shewing them how difficult it would be for him to explain as they ought to be, the six principal Parts he had observ'd in 'em, *viz.* the Light, the Composition, Proportion, Expression, Colouring, and

and Harmony throughout; he said, he would endeavour to imitate the Bees, who when they found a Garden enamell'd with Flowers, made choice of some of them on which they took Pleasure to gather Honey. Thus he would only insist on some of the most considerable Parts of this Work, from whence he thought he could draw most Instruction; for though there was nothing in it which did not deserve to be examined, he could not enter into a very exact Detail, by Reason of the short Time he had to speak.

As it is the Light which discovers all Objects, and gives us the Means of considering them, it was with it likewise he thought proper to begin his Remarks; as he found nothing in the Picture that more surprized the Sight, than those fine Effects of Light, which the Painter has so artfully represented.

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He has intended to represent a Morning, because it is likely our Saviour chose that Time as the most fit, and that wherein Objects appear with the best Advantage, that the Men might have the greater Pleasure when their Eyes were opened, and that the Miracles might be more Manifest and Evident.

Mr. *Bourdon* remarked therefore in the first Place, that the Quality of the Light which the Painter had so well represented, gave a Lustre to all his Work. For as the Sun is yet very low, his Rays shoot parallel to the Mountains and other high Bodies which are exposed to it, so we see the middle of the Picture covered with a great Shade because of the Buildings which are raised to very great Heights; so that all the Ground of the Pictures being deprived of the Light, they appear with a much greater Relief of Force and Beauty. And as on the highest Places the Light strikes differently, and brightens some Parts of the Mountains,

Mountains, the Trees, and some Houses ; the Eye is more agreeably touched, as these Streams of Light make a fine Contrast with the Shades and half Tints which meet in all the different Objects. For among that diversity of Houses, and even upon the Mountain there are Trees, which being only enlighten'd by the Rays of the Sun on the Tops and Extremities, do yet retain a thick Air, which gives a fine Freshness to the Places, and fills them with a sweet Colour that unites all together very softly.

But what he desired they would observe, was, that though the Buildings, which are most enlighten'd, are just above *Christ's* Head, they do not for all that diminish any thing of his Light and Force ; because they are at a great Distance, and their Light is weakened and extinguished by the Interposition of the Air. This does not fail to produce a most admirable Effect throughout the whole, when
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we see one Light heighten'd by another; it being very difficult to make Lights more conspicuous by means of other Lights, than by Shades.

These great Shades which cover the Buildings nearest the View, do not serve merely to raise the Light which strikes the Tops of the Mountains, and to be a Ground to the Figures; but they likewise serve to hinder us from seeing too great a Diversity of Colours and Lights on all the Houses, which would appear too distinctly if they were enlightened, but not so when they have Shades of this Sort. For though all the Parts retain their true Tints, yet the Shade which passes above them, is as it were a Veil to extinguish their Vivacity, and hinder their having so much Strength as to fill the View, and thrust out other Objects more considerable, and on which the Painter has laid greater Stress. But in return, he has not failed to fill those Places with Light where he saw it
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would not hurt the Beauty of his Figures ; and to make it appear with the greater Lustre, he has been sparing, and put but little of it together, and only in certain Places where he could do it to Advantage, being opposed to these Bodies which are deprived of Light.

As to this Article he has shewn how Ingenious he was in the Distribution of Lights and Shades, and how well he knew by that Means to add Strength, Beauty, and Grace to all the Parts of his Picture.

He supposes *Jesus Christ* and those that were with him to be in a Place open on all Hands, where there was nothing to keep the Light of the Sun from them, so that they are strongly enlighten'd ; but the Strength of the Light is distributed with so much Judgment, that whilst it shines equally on them all, this artful Painter has known how to weaken it in Proportion to the Distance of every Body, which he has not done where it does not diminish as much as is

necessary to let us know what its Distance is.

Then he proceeded to shew how Mr. *Poussin*, in order to give more Roundness to these very Figures, and to deceive the Sight with more Address, had managed the Force of the Shades ; and how he had made use of half Tints and reflected Lights, without which there would have appeared too much Affectation in the Conduct of the Piece. For these Figures are in so free a Posture, that all the Disposition is easy, and the Lights very natural. And tho' the Sun shines with great Force upon the enlighten'd Parts, we do not see any reflected Lights, which have a bad Effect, because all the Figures are placed in such a manner, that the Colours cannot reflect upon one another.

The first blind Man, who probably might have a great Reflexion of Light, because *Christ's* Robe is very much enlightened, is not for all that too much so, because the Painter has had the Discretion to put
him

him in such a Posture, as he could not receive a second Light very sensibly ; and we see that the Reflexions throughout all the Figures proceed only from the universal Light, wherewith all the Objects that surround them are enlightened ; which gives them more sweet and natural Tints, than when they are produced by the lively and strong Colours that are nearest them. But yet we cannot fail perceiving some of the enlightened Parts which have very strong Reflexions, but these are such Parts as seem to demand their particular Help, because they have a great deal of Grace and Beauty in them, as in the Hand with which *Christ* is lifting his Cloak.

Mr. *Bourdon* desir'd them next to observe, that the Lights and Shades are not laid out in small Quantities, but largely, as in the yellow Mantle of one of the Apostles. Not but that in all the Lights and Shades of all the Vestments, there are as many Foldings as are

necessary, but they are not made in the Shades and Lights with the same Colours ; that is, they are not broken by the half Tints, and weakening the Lustre of the Lights and Force of the Shades.

After this Mr. *Bourdon* came to speak of the Composition of all the Picture. It was, he said, from Mr. *Poussin*, that they who would treat a Subject, might first learn to study the Nature of the Place, and other Circumstances necessary to the History they would represent. Here he has been careful to instruct us in the Nature of the Country of *Jericho*, and its Situation ; because it was at his going out of this City that *Christ* performed the Miracle he is representing. That he has carefully read *Josephus*, who speaks of this Country as one of the finest and sweetest in the World ; and ascribes the Fertility of the Soil to the Virtue of a Well near the City, the Water of which moistening the
Lands

Lands round about it, makes them fat and fertile, and produce all kinds of fine Trees. For this Reason it is that we see Palaces and Houses of Pleasure on the Banks of the River, because it is commonly in places like these that great Men take pleasure to build ; and thus in representing the Beauty of the Country, he has found means to please the Sight, by the diverting Objects with which he has fill'd his Picture, but without doing any thing which by the great Lustre of it might dazzle the Eyes, and divert them from the Figures which are the chief Object.

He added, that besides the fine Disposition in these Figures, we ought to observe their Features and Proportion, which are two Parts depending upon Design, but might be considered jointly. The Figures being cloathed, it is difficult to observe all the Sizes, so as to compare their different Heights ; and therefore he would content himself with telling them,

them, the Figure of *Christ* was eight Parts of the Head high, which is the Proportion the ancient *Greek* and *Roman* Sculptors observed in all their Statues as the most perfect. This is likewise the Stature of the Apostles, though their long full Habits make them appear a little lower, which is also suitable to their Birth and low Education.

One of the finest Figures in the Picture, he said, was in his Opinion that of the blind Man ; his Proportion seems to be taken from that fine ancient Statue of the dying Gladiator in the *Farnese* Palace at *Rome*. For though there are some things in the Members of that Statue which do not come near the Beauty and Delicacy of some others, which are more admirable ; all the Parts are nevertheless so just and well formed, that it has always been in great Esteem among the Learned.

And in the other blind Man there are some of the Proportions of the
ancient

ancient *Apollo*, but not so much Grace and Nobleness ; as the Painter has added to the Largeness of his Figure to discover the Meanness of him whom he intended to represent.

He likewise observed some Resemblance of the *Venus of Medicis* in the Woman, who is turning about. But as the Time would not permit him to enter into a particular Examination of these Figures, he only begg'd Leave to observe the Cloathing which concealed them; for it is so fine, and so well put on, that we may make it a very useful Study. The foremost Apostle, who has a yellow Cloak, is done with the same Intention, and upon the Maxims of *Raphael*, who commonly cloathed his principal Figures with large and wide Garments, leaving the small Pieces and slightest Draperies to the most distant ones. These are very important Lessons for young Students.

Although the Expression be admirable in all the Figures, Mr. *Bour-*
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don said, he would not insist on any of them but that of *Christ*, because it is so wonderful, that we can hardly take our Eyes off it to look to the rest.

We cannot enough admire the Grandeur, Nobleness, and Majesty Divine which the Painter has so well represented : Here we see that Authority, with which *Christ* acted when he wrought his Miracles. His Power appears in his Mien and Action, and we see an Air of Goodness and Sweetness, which equally charms our Souls and our Eyes.

He desir'd they would observe how attentive the Apostles are to see what happens ; how well the two blind Men express the Greatness of their Faith by the Conformity of their Actions ; and how the old Man clad in Red, and he who is stooping, by their Gestures discover their Astonishment, and the Desire which this incredulous

lous Nation had to see Miracles performed.

The Colours of *Christ's* Cloathing are not such as the Painter has laid on one after another without great Contrivance. As Yellow and White partake most of the Light, Mr. *Bourdon* told them, it was for that Reason that Mr. *Poussin* had put them into *Christ's* Robe, because they are sweet Colours near the Carnation, and are also more lively and apparent. His Cloak is of a purple Colour much heighten'd by the Lustre of his Robe, and uniting softly with it ; for that Colour composed of Red and Blue partakes a great deal of the Tincture of the Light, and Air. Thus his Cloaths being of a very bright and celestial Colour, they perfectly suited him who wore them, as the most worthy and principal Object in all the Picture.

Although the yellow Mantle of the first Apostle be very bright, it does not destroy the Colour of *Christ's*,

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but agrees perfectly with it, as it likewise does with the blue and red Draperies of the other two Disciples.

He shewed them, that Mr. *Poussin* had sullied and in a manner extinguished the dark Colour of the blind Men's Cloaths, that they might have the less Luster, and being more proper to their Condition, help to set off the other Cloathing.

It is likewise this Disposition of Colours, which begets that admirable Harmony that constitutes the Beauty of this Picture; and Mr. *Bourdon* shewed them, the Painter had made so good use of it, that all the Figures were softly united with the Bodies, which served them for a Ground; as in that of the Apostle clad in Blue, and in the Woman clothed in Green, the Draperies of which are sweetly joined to Trees and Terrasses; and though all the Colours he has used are very bright, they are so well dispos'd, that there is a wonderful Agreement among

among them, having diffused over them all an universal Light, where-with the Air is enlighten'd, which gives them this Union and Grace, and makes them so agreeable and sweet to the Sight.

When Mr. *Bourdon* had done speaking, one of the Company said, he could not deny, but all the Beauties which had been observed in the Picture were really in it; but that notwithstanding, as Mr. *Poussin* had undertaken to treat so considerable a Subject, as that of our Saviour's curing the two blind Men near *Jericbo*, he thought he had not expressed it with all the Grandeur and all the Circumstances which ought to accompany so great an Action. Since this Miracle being performed in the Presence of a vast Number of People who followed *Christ*, he had painted but three Apostles, the two blind Men, four other Figures, and a Woman, who is not very attentive to what passes, and whose

Action seems to be too indifferent for an Occasion where there ought to be an extraordinary Admiration and Surprize: That so small a Number of Figures do not fill up the Composition of his Work so much as the Subject requires, which nevertheless is very essential and necessary to shew that these two blind Men are those who were cured at the Departure from *Jericho*.

To this another Gentleman replied: As to what regards the Figure of the Woman, 'tis true indeed that Mr. *Poussin* might have given her some stronger Expression; though we may say, that being at a great Distance, she cannot see well what is doing.

But as to a greater Number of Figures than appears in this Work, he was not obliged to have them; because we cannot suppose that all the Multitude who followed *Christ* could be about him at once, and being some Steps distant from him, they

they are concealed by the Buildings. That there are Witnesses enough of the Action, since by that Person cloath-ed in Red, who appears surpriz'd, the Painter has represented the Astonishment of the *Jews*; and by him who is looking very near, he shews the Desire that Nation had to see Miracles wrought.

A greater Number of Figures would only have occasion'd Confusion, and hinder'd those of *Christ* and the blind Men from being seen so distinctly.

But besides all these Reasons, we must consider that Mr. *Poussin* having no other Design but to represent *Jesus Christ*, who cured the two blind Men; 'tis sufficient that he has rightly expressed the Greatness of that Miracle, all the other Things which he has omitted, being only necessary and of no Importance, and which not serving to the Accomplishment of this Cure, might only breed Confusion,

fufion, and fpoil the Unity of his *Ordonnance*.

'Tis certain that in a Difpofition of Pictures, the more Figures there are, the more Objects will be formed to draw our Attention. The Painter intending here to fix the Eyes of the Spectators entirely on *Chrift* to make them obferve his Action, it was more advantageous to represent him with few People about him, to the End that thofe whom he has painted, being attentive to behold him, might in fome Meafure contribute to make the Spectators equally attentive, without being led off by other Motions and Expreffions, which they would be obliged to make in a Composition of a great Number of Figures.

We muft therefore admire Mr. *Pouffin*, for having fo well represented his History, fince there is nothing in it which is not perfectly agreeable to his Subject, not only in
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the Actions of his Figures, but also in the Disposition of the Place, and in the Lights and Shades.

We know very well, that this is the Cure of the blind Men which St. *Matthew* mentions in the 20th Chapter, since we see the fine Buildings of *Jericho*, and even that Fountain is spoken of in the Scripture; but what is most rare and admirable in this Work is, that our Saviour being to restore Sight to these two Men, and to fill their Souls with Joy, the Painter has likewise diffused thro' his Picture a certain Air of Joy, and Beauty of Light, which makes a general Expression of what he intended to represent by his particular Action; and this Joy which is so well communicated to all the Figures, is the Cause of that we feel on beholding them.

This is an Observation well worthy our Attention, and which we may make in all the Works of Mr. *Poussin*, who has here given such a general Character of what he intended

ed to represent in particular, that when he undertakes a sad and grievous Subject, even the most insensible Things seem to feel Grief and Sorrow ; and if he is representing Fury and Anger, one would almost say that Heaven was threatening Earth, and that there is a certain Commotion in the Air, not unlike that he represents in the Faces of his Figures.

These blind Men, who would have been represented by another Painter deform'd and ill accouter'd, the better to shew their Misery and Poverty, have yet nothing here that is ugly or disagreeable to the Sight, and yet carry evident Marks of their Poverty. This indeed is a wonderful Talent of Mr. *Poussin*, that he has disposed all his Figures so well, and made such a fine Choice of every thing which enters into the Composition of his Works, that there is nothing but what is very beautiful and pleasant to behold.

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The Action of the blind Men is the same, because they have both one Design, and are wanting the same Thing, namely the Recovery of their Sight. As they have but one and the same Thought, the Nerves which come down from their Brain, and move the Head, make them both act in the same manner; for both their Muscles being equally extended, make their Faces, Noses, and Cheeks fall down, and retire in the same manner; insomuch that we may say they resemble one another, and that both their Faces, tho' very different, are formed upon the same Model.

This Gentleman having ended his Discourse, another Person added, that as a Painter has diverse Objects, he has also different Ends in what he proposes to represent: some occasions there are when his principal End is to divert, and other where he ought to instruct, and there are yet others where he ought to instruct and divert both together. In these different In-

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tentions,

tentions, the Painter ought to have a particular Aim with respect to his Art, which consists in representing any Subject whatsoever in such a manner, that there may be nothing in the Whole but what contributes to its Grandeur, and the Facility in the *Ordonnance* and Disposition of the Figures, a Beauty and Force in the Proportion and Parts of the Drawing, and a judicious Conduct in the Arrangement of Colours and Distribution of Lights. It depends upon the goodness of his Genius and great Capacity to execute rightly these Parts of which he is absolutely Master, and which belong generally to all Works of the Pencil. But when he is going to paint an Historical Piece, there are Circumstances which he cannot change, without running the Hazard of being found Fault with, chiefly in those where he ought to act the Part of a faithful Historian, of an Event which has either happen'd in our Days, or in the most remote

remote Times. But most of all in what regards the Mysteries of our Religion and the Miracles of *Christ*, he ought to preserve all possible Fidelity, and never to swerve from what is generally believed and well known to many; for in that Case, undertaking to tell by the Stroke of his Pencil, what an Historian does by Words, he ought neither to add nor diminish to what the Scripture obliges us to believe, but rather to mark, as exactly as he can, all the Circumstances of his Subject.

So that though Mr. *Poussin* has chang'd nothing with regard to the particular Action of *Jesus Christ*, who cured the two blind Men, we cannot say but his Work would have been more perfect, if he had represented every thing which might have been of use to discover plainly the Manner in which that Miracle happen'd: as, to shew the Multitude which followed *Christ*, the blind Men pressing among the Crowd,

some of whom hinder'd them to approach, as is expressly told in the Scripture.

It would appear, our Saviour intended to work this Miracle before a great Number of the *Jews*, that in giving Sight to these two blind Men, it might serve to enlighten them, who were buried in the Darknefs of Sin ; he did not suffer them to follow him long, and redouble their Cries, till all the Multitude should intercede for them, and so make the Cure more publick, and do it with the greater Magnificence. These are Particulars well worthy of Observation, and most essential Ones in the Representation of this Miracle, to distinguish it from others.

Mr. *Poussin* has been skilful enough in the Disposition of his Work, not to conceal the principal Figures in his Picture, among a great Number of Persons who are represented; it being no great Difficulty to that
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fine Artift to make a great many People follow *Chrift* without laming his Subject, of which even the Multitude ought to make part, as in the Picture of the Manna, which is treated with fo much Dignity.

But as to what regards this Picture in another Shape, and not to imagine that Mr. *Poussin* has been guilty of these Faults which some lay to his Charge, because he did not think he intended to represent here the Miracle which was performed near *Jericho*, but that which is mentioned by St. *Matthew* in the 9th Chapter, when *Chrift* after having raised the Prince of the Synagogue's Daughter, and on his Return was followed by two blind Men, to whom he did not give Sight till he was near *Rome*.

Upon this Mr. *Bourdon*, interrupting him who spoke, said, It does not at all appear that he has intended to represent here the blind Men whom the Scripture calls the first, for they were cured in the House where our Saviour

Saviour lodged, and these represented here are in the High-way. Moreover the City of *Jericho* is so well mark'd out by the Beauty of the Buildings, and by the remarkable Fountain which runs by the Houses, that we have no reason to doubt but this is the same Miracle which happen'd in that Country, that he has here intended to make a faithful Representation of.

Besides that, when our Lord wrought the first Miracle, he had no Witnesses, having even forbidden the blind Men to speak of it to any Person.

He who was of the contrary Opinion replied, that if the Text bears that *Christ* cured them when he was come to the House, that does not determine absolutely if it was done in a Chamber, or even in a Court, but only when he was come near *Rome*; for it is a very common way of speaking, to say a Person brought back another to him, and to his House, tho' he did

did not go within the Door: and even in the Text, according to the vulgar Reading, the words are *Cum venisset domum*, when he had come to the House; whereas a little after, when it is said our Lord raised the Prince of the Synagogue's Daughter, the same Text bears, *Cum venisset in domum*, when he was come into the House. So that if we allow the Painter to make a favourable Use of these two different Expressions, he may believe that one of the Evangelists intended to say, *Christ* entred into the House to raise the Ruler's Daughter, because she was really in a Chamber; but in the other Passage where he only says, *Cum venisset domum*, that signifies only, that the blind Men having followed our Lord along the Way, he did not stop to cure them, till he was come near his Lodging.

As to his making this Miracle be done in secret, and that even *Christ* himself did not intend it should be known;

known ; the Evangelist does not say there were any Witnesses ; and we cannot say he did it too publickly, when he only admitted the three Disciples and four others, who might be there among some of them who accompanied the blind Men, or some of the Neighbourhood, or perhaps People passing by. But supposing this Miracle had been done in the House, and that we should have no regard to these different Phrases in Scripture, it would have been a much less Fault to have represented it in the Street, and near the House where our Saviour lodged, than to make that an Action done before a great Number of People, which should be Painted in a retired Place and almost without Witnesses. As to the Woman cloathed in green, we cannot find Fault that she is not much surprized, being, as we have said, at so great a Distance, as to be ignorant of what passes ; and since our Saviour had only laid his Hands upon the first
blind

blind Man, and the Miracle was not yet performed, why should she be surpris'd ? But farther, we must think that this Miracle was done at *Capernaum*, where *Christ* commonly lived, where the People were so hardened in Error, that they would not consider the Miracles which he daily wrought before their Eyes, nor would they reform their Lives, though he preached daily among them, and gave them terrible Threatenings, as we see in the Scripture.

As to the City of *Jericho*, which is said to be represented in this Picture, he said, there were some Marks by which we may presume that it is rather *Jericho* than *Capernaum*. 'Tis true, that as *Josephus* describes *Jericho*, it is a well-built City, and finely situated : That the Fountain, of which *Elisba* changed the Malignity of its Waters, and made them healthful and good, waters the Places about it, and contributes very much to the Fertility of it ; but *Josephus*

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phus, all the ancient Geographers, or our modern Travellers, do not mention any thing but of the Mountain which is near the Place where the City of *Jericho* stood : there are neither Buildings nor Trees ; on the contrary, they all agree that the City stood in a Plain, surrounded with Mountains, which formed a kind of Amphitheatre ; that none but the Bottoms of the Hills had any Verdure, all the rest is barren, parched, and uninhabited round about ; particularly the Places nearest *Jericho*, which they call the *Quarrantine* Mountain, which is very high, rugged and inaccessible. Here it was that our Saviour retired after his Baptism, fasting forty Days and forty Nights, and was tempted of the Devil ; and it is of it probably that *Josephus* speaks, when he says, that *Jericho* is situated in a Plain, very near a Mountain, which is very long, bare and barren, producing nothing, and is quite uninhabited. The Water

ter which is represented in this Picture, and which is said to be the Fountain of *Elisba*, it can only be one of the Rivers; for that Spring sends forth a greater Stream than we see here, tho' even that be considerable enough to be observed.

But if Mr. *Poussin* had intended to represent *Jericho*, he would have exhibited more particular and significant Marks than these, which may be common to many other Places. As it is frequently called in Scripture the City of *Palm-trees*, because of the great Number of them which grew thereabout, he certainly would have painted some of them, and embellish'd the Gardens and Terrasses with fine Pomegranate-Trees, and the fragrant Trees which produce Effence. But nothing of this is to be seen; and among all the Trees which he has painted, there is not one which resembles the Palm-Tree, tho' that Kind has a peculiar Right to be found in the Picture.

Nor is it probable that among all the Buildings, the Architecture of which of he has been so careful to shew, that he would have forgot the Amphitheatre and the Hypodrome, which contributed so much to the Ornament of that City. He who, in painting *Egypt*, has not omitted the Pyramids, the Obelisks, and the other things which distinguish that Country.

But if we see nothing here peculiar to the City of *Jericho*, why may we not rather believe that it is the City of *Capernaum* which the Painter has intended to represent? since it was likewise a very great and populous City, filled with a great Number of Palaces and rich Houses, as being the Capital and most considerable of all high *Galilee*: We know it was situated on the Bank of the River *Jordan* at the Mouth of the Sea of *Tiberias* in the most fertile and agreeable Place of the Country; that the maritime Places are rocky, and that there were several Towers and Castles here-

thereabouts. 'Twas about a League distant from a Mountain which at this Day is called the Mount of *Christ*, because our Saviour went there frequently ; from thence it was that he preached the Beatitudes to his Apostles, and where he perform'd the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. The Mountain represented in the Picture, resembles very much what they call the Mount *Quarrantine*, because they who speak of the Mountain of *Christ*, say it is only high and rugged on the Side of the Sea of *Galilee* ; on the land Side it rises gradually by little Heights, which are cultivated, and covered with very agreeable Plants and Flowers. That at the Foot of that Mountain there is a Fountain, called the Spring of *Caper-naum*, which divides its Waters into 3 Rivulets, the first of which runs into the Sea, between its Source and the City of *Caper-naum* ; the second runs by the City of *Bethsaida*, and the third waters the Land of *Genesareth*. 'Tis the Land side which the Painter has represented

represented here, whereas the Side towards the Sea is most agreeable.

It may be farther objected, whether the Time in which our Saviour wrought the Miracle at *Capernaum* was the same which Mr. *Poussin* has taken upon him to represent. But to this it may be answered, that it is very difficult to fix the Time when he did these two Actions. For tho' Mr. *Bourdon* had in a manner assured us that it was in the Morning, yet after all that, having brought to Harmony what the Evangelists have written on both the Miracles, we must still remain uncertain of the true Time in which it might have been done. And we may only say, that the Painter has made choice of the Morning as the best Time of the Day.

What ought to convince every one that this is a Representation of the Miracle which *Christ* did at *Capernaum*, on his Departure from the Ruler of the Synagogue's House, is what the Scripture says, that when he
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went to raise up the Ruler's Daughter, there was none of his Disciples with him but *John, Peter, and James*, and that on his Return he gave Sight to the two blind Men ; thus, in all probability, there were none but these three Apostles with him, whom Mr. *Poussin* has so well represented ; whereas at the Miracle of *Jericho* all his Apostles were with him, and a great Multitude besides. So that granting only these Things, which cannot reasonably be deny'd, 'twill be found that Mr. *Poussin* has treated his History with all Probability, and that far from finding any fault in his Picture, we shall be obliged to own that it is a most accomplished Piece, and which cannot be sufficiently admired. For whether we observe the rich and agreeable Situation of the Place, or consider the fine and noble Disposition of the Figures ; whether he attracts our Eyes by the Sweetness and Vivacity of his Colours ; or if we stay to examine the Lights, which are
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Natural and so well understood; or finally, if we allow ourselves to be transported by the Force and Grandeur of his Expressions, every thing is in its most perfect State; and if we consider all the Figures attentively, we imagine we comprehend what they are doing and thinking. By the Action of the first blind Man, his Faith and Confidence in him who is touching him is expressed; in the second, the Favour he is asking is likewise shown. As it is common for Persons who are deprived of any one of the five Senses, to have the rest better and more subtil; because the Spirits which move in them, to make them know what they want, move with greater Force, having fewer Offices to perform; thus they who have lost their Sight, have a more acute Hearing, and a more sensible Touch. This is what Mr. *Poussin* has intended to express in the last blind Man, and in which he has wonderfully succeeded. For by his Face and his Arms

Arms one may know he is all Attention to the Voice of our Saviour, and endeavouring to find him out. This attentive Harkening appears in his Forehead, which is not quite smooth; the Skin and all the other Parts of which are drawn up. He likewise discovers it, by suspending all the Motions of his Countenance, which continue in that Posture to give time to his Ear to listen more attentively, and that he may not be diverted.

As it is natural for old Men to be diffident and incredulous, the Painter has represented an old Man coming forward to see the blind Man cured. He makes no doubt but the two Men are really blind, as they were known in the Country; but he questions the Power of the Physician, not being able to persuade himself that one could restore the Sight merely by a Touch of the Hand. For that Reason he takes care he did not quickly apply some Medicine; and his Curiosity, joined to his Distrust, makes

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him

him anxious to discover how the Man's Eyes will be opened. He is therefore so very attentive to see, that his Eyes appear very big, his Eyebrows elevated, his Face full of Wrinkles, because all his Spirits being carried towards the Part employed, make the Muscles swell towards that Place.

The Man who is cloathed in Red, and his Cap in the form of a Turbant, does not stay to behold the blind Man, but is stedfastly looking on *Christ*; and as the Action he is going to perform is very extraordinary, he appears astonished and wrapt in Admiration. He wonders like a Man of Sense, who meditates on what he sees: his Eyes are fixed on the Face of *Christ*, as if he meant to discover whence that Virtue comes which gives him so great Power.

In the other Figure which advances to see the blind Man, his Reason is not so much employed to observe the Grandeur of him who performs

forms the Cure, as he is gazing to see what passes. Thus the Physiognomy of this Man does not appear very ingenious; his Head is large and overcharged with Flesh, which is not a Token of a Man of Sense.

The other Figure, who is holding the last blind Man, has a very rustick Air: and as for the three Apostles, the Airs of their Countenances are very different. It is most probable, as has been said, that Mr. *Poussin* intended to represent St. *John*, St. *Peter* and St. *James*, who were, as we may say, the three Favourites of our Lord, who always went along with him on such Occasions as he was to shew his Power and Glory. He that is clad in Yellow may be taken for St. *James*, whose Face we see only in Profile: but even there, a certain Air of Joy appears, which discovers the Pleasure he takes on seeing the blind Man approach his Master with so great Faith. As for St. *John*, who is a young Man cloathed in Red, he seems to look

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with

with a Mixture of Compassion and Disdain on the old Man, who is so earnest to see the blind Man's Eyes, and observing what Effect that Miracle will have upon that incredulous and curious Soul. In the Countenance of this Saint we perceive the true Marks of that Love and Purity which render'd him the well-beloved of the Son of God : and whether we observe the Tranquillity of his Countenance, or consider the Largeness and Vivacity of his Eyes, or finally, if we attend to his fine fresh Complexion ; every Thing about him represents the Goodness of his Constitution and the Purity of his Soul.

As for St. *Peter*, though we only see the Top of his bald Head and one of his Eyes, we may yet observe in that Eye and Eye-brow something which shews his Indignation against that hardened People.

To what Mr. *Bourdon* has said on the Colours and Lights, which serve to advance the Figures, or make them retire,

retire, may be added, that not only all the Colours of the Drapery are made in a friendly Harmony with one another, but the Figures are also disposed in such a Manner, that no one enlightened Part falls upon another that is equally lighted, nor one great Shade upon another of the same Force. For when the Extremity of one clear Drapery comes to terminate upon another, it is commonly in a Place where there is a half Teint. Which is also observed in the Parts that are shaded, the Terminations of which do not fall upon the stronger Shades. And it is this which serves to make the Body come out, and hinder two bright Colours which are near one another from coming together, and strike the Eye so suddenly that they confound one another. For what occasions that Confusion which commonly dazzles the Eyes, is, when too many enlightened Parts are near one another.

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In the same Manner, when Shades are confounded together, they hinder us from distinguishing Bodies rightly, and only make them appear like a very obscure and disagreeable Mass. But when a Painter observes a fine Oeconomy of Colours and Lights, such as appears in this Picture, he then gives his Work that Harmony and Union which makes an agreeable Concert and charming Sweetness that never cloy the Sight.





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